

# RELIGION IN LIFE

A CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY of opinion and discussion

---

VOL. XXV

Winter, 1955-56

NO. 1

---

## CONTENTS

Where Do We Go From Here in Theology? . . . . . Nels F. S. Ferre 5

PAUL TILlich, CORNELIUS VAN TIL, ALDEN D. KELLEY

Theology Beyond Paradox . . . . .	ARNOLD B. COME	35
Changing Conceptions and Unchanging Truth . . . . .	WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE	47
The Relevance of Ministerial Training . . . . .	RONALD A. WARD	55
Protestant Theology and Church Life . . . . .	JOHN B. COBB, JR.	65
The Socio-Ethical Ambiguities of Religion . . . . .	OLIVER R. WHITLEY	76
Methodist Theology in America in the Nineteenth Century . . . . .	LELAND H. SCOTT	87
Rest for Your Souls . . . . .	WALTER LOWRIE	99
Gamaliel Bradford's Use of Words . . . . .	LOWELL M. ATKINSON	105
The Literature of the Baptists . . . . .	LEO T. CRISMON	117
Book Reviews . . . . .		132
Book Notices . . . . .		158

## A Prayer of St. Augustine

### From "On the Trinity"

SO WERE IT BETTER to bring this Book at last to an end, not with argument, but with prayer.

O Lord our God, we believe in thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. . . . Guiding the effort of my mind by this rule of faith, I have sought thee with all my power, with all the power thou hast created in me: I have desired greatly to see with my understanding that which I have believed; I have made much discourse and much toil therein. O Lord my God, my one hope, hear me, that weariness may not lessen my will to seek thee, that I may seek thy face evermore with eager heart. Do thou give strength to seek thee, as thou hast made me to find thee, and given hope of finding thee ever more and more. My strength and my weakness are in thy hands: preserve the one, and remedy the other. In thy hands are my knowledge and my ignorance: where thou hast opened to me, receive my entering in; where thou hast shut, open to my knocking. Let me remember thee, understand thee, love thee: increase in me all these, until thou restore me to thy perfect pattern.

. . . When therefore we shall have attained to thee, all those many things which we speak, and attain not, shall cease; one shalt thou abide, all things in all; one shall we name thee without end, praising thee with one single voice, we ourselves also made one in thee. O Lord, one God, God the Trinity, whatsoever I have said that comes of thy prompting, may thy people acknowledge it: for what I have said that comes only of myself, I ask of thee and of thy people pardon.

—From *Augustine: Later Works*. Edited by John Burnaby.  
The Westminster Press, 1955. Used by permission.



# *Where Do We Go From Here in Theology?*

NELS F. S. FERRÉ

AT EVANSTON many recognized the need for a deeper American theology. In Europe I was once told by a group of Christian leaders that they were looking to America for a revival of effective theology. Europe is too tired, they said, to produce constructive thought. Having lived through two world wars and standing on the edge of undreamed-of destruction, its more mature leaders are too shocked by events to think daring thoughts about God's ways with human history. With a frustrated future, the younger leaders, too, seem unable to create a theology of hope. These Christian leaders therefore urged us American theologians to produce an effective Christian theology.

The embarrassment at Evanston and the request from these European leaders coincide with a general turn to theology. To religion there is a rush. The more thoughtful in this rush are increasingly devoting their attention to theology.

Such a turn to theology is healthy, for theology is study concerning God. By God we mean the ultimate nature and purpose of existence. Therefore the turn to theology is really a deliberate attempt to understand the ground of our being, the goal of our lives, and the direction which we must choose in order to fashion the goal of our lives in line with the ground of our being. The turn to theology is thus our deliberate confrontation of our most important decisions, whether as persons or as a society.

Let us, then, turn to theology. There are positions which put strong stress on objectivity, or something external to our faith as being its standard; there are also positions which magnify the subjective, our inner response, or our "existential involvement." Our task in this analysis is to describe and to evaluate these two positions, showing afterwards that they require each other, and that only by the right combination of the two can we begin to move forward toward a genuine and creative theology.

---

NELS F. S. FERRÉ, A.M., B.D., Ph.D., is Professor of Philosophical Theology in the School of Religion, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. The address published here was delivered at the University of Southern California for its School of Religion and the Southern California Council of Churches, in 1954.

## I

The position which puts strong stress on objectivity may perhaps best be characterized by three representative movements: Fundamentalism, the High Church wing, and "Barthian" biblicism.

A. *Fundamentalism* evinces real strength. It builds on the Bible as inerrant and all-adequate truth. There is a sturdy givenness about its faith. Actually its main position is, for the most part, a continuation of classical Christianity. Fundamentalism at its heart antedates and ignores modern scholarship. The fact that the biblical faith is simply taken for granted facilitates an unquestioning and unwavering allegiance to supernatural Christianity. Fundamentalism also accepts as innate to revelation, propositional truth. What is written is true and "there" for any reader, whether he believes or not. The Revelation as such is not dependent in any way upon the response of the reader nor affected by it. There is also an evangelical warmth, zeal and at-homeness on the part of Fundamentalism which makes faith vital and all-encompassing.

Unfortunately Fundamentalism also suffers from critical weaknesses. It is pre-critical! According to the best knowledge we have, which is generally agreed upon and responsibly taught, the Bible is not literally true. A high-ranking church official came to one of my colleagues at the seminary with an anguished heart because his high-school daughter had come to ask him whether she was to believe, as to the age of the earth, what she was taught in Sunday school from the Bible or by her geology teacher in high school. He himself, he said, could kind of believe both points of view according to convenience, but he did not want his daughter to live in a split world of knowledge and faith.

Biblical literalism, although valuable for its stark objectivity, has also occasioned divisions in the church as different people have seized upon different statements from the Bible as of paramount importance. Under biblical literalism as sole authority the church has grown by fission, providing creative variety and competitive drive, to be sure, but, even more, confusion and weakening competition.

Without a principle for discriminating use of the Bible, Fundamentalism has failed to apprehend a God great enough or good enough to answer the need for worship which the Bible itself, at its highest, has awakened. No religion can serve its age unless its main truth and its highest aspirations are equal to, and go beyond, the moral sensitivities of its most thoughtful and dedicated people.

As a whole, too, Fundamentalism has sponsored a dualism in which there has been neither hope for, nor concern with, the world as such. Fundamentalism has therefore generally dampened man's desire for constructive social and political participation and, in fact, encouraged cultural sterility.

The strength of Fundamentalism cannot be doubted, nor can the warmth and genuineness of its worship and fellowship; but it suffers from too many and serious weaknesses to become the kind of creative theology which is now almost a matter of do or die. It cannot fully satisfy the enormous hunger for the power of redemptive religion which has already been awakened by the needs of our day.

B. *The High Church wing of Christianity*, moreover, possesses strength in its objective control. This strength is organizational and in terms of allegiance to a well-defined tradition. There is power in revered tradition, in the holy heritage of divinely established continuity, and in commonly accepted, authoritative means of worship. Such control allows a considerable theological flexibility, which during days of change in thought is a decided asset to faith. Members of High Church movements know also the binding power of a close-knit community. They experience satisfying importance in belonging. Besides, those within this wing are usually esthetically and culturally mature. Worship is wed with beauty.

Nevertheless the High Church wing has its own kind of weaknesses. It suffers from an "in-group" psychology based on external standards. Its kind of objectivity becomes the occasion for an offish exclusiveness. Usually it feels little need for, and often cannot even tolerate, Christian inclusiveness. With its limited conception of the church comes often a narrow conception of God, the church, and the plan for salvation. Too often High Churchism is, *in fact*, the religion of a privileged group or of those seeking security within organizational control and historic definiteness and rigor.

C. "*Barthian*" *biblicism*, again, has until recently been the strongest current in modern Protestantism. Its strength has consisted in its avowed return to main-line Christianity. It has aimed at the classical biblical faith, but by being open also to biblical criticism, it has avoided one of the central weaknesses of Fundamentalism. Its acceptance of a genuine degree of existentialism has given it a flexibility and accent on personal decision, even in thinking, which has relieved its objective rigidity. It has also exhibited a truly prophetic quality in social matters, without being hamstrung by any social theory.

All the same, "*Barthian*" *biblicism* has its weak points. Its doctrine

of Revelation, eschewing propositional content as well as external criteria, is too vague to focus the Gospel for thought and conduct. Thus this kind of objectivism ranges all the way from a "sophisticated Fundamentalism" to a nearly contentless existentialism, where little is believed either as to history or as to present power for transformed experience. This position often becomes "new modernism," as Van Til styles it.

"Barthian" biblicism also lacks a constructive doctrine of the Church and of Christian experience. It has no real doctrine of creation and creativity, either, *as far as God's own presence is concerned*. Nor is there an organic connection of any kind between revelation and redemption on one side and, on the other, between creation and history. Barthian biblicism, at least, falls far short of any natural capacity to relate biblical objectivism to education, social theory, and secular concerns. Barth himself has made stabs in the direction of these needs; but he has never opened his central gospel to these spheres. There must, to be sure, be a strong difference between the Gospel and the world, and no mere rational or moral continuity between the world of biblical faith and our sinful world is possible; but if God is both Creator and Redeemer, there must be a real relation between the world of redemption and that of creation which is accessible to the Christian community, Christian interpretation, and Christian action.

## II

The second position which was mentioned in our opening survey was the one which puts strong stress on subjectivism.

A. The most obvious among these positions is *Liberalism*. Liberalism, in general, makes reasoned experience its standard for truth.

The strength of liberalism lies in its openness to truth, its aim at consistency of interpretation of "the unity of truth," its vigorous advocacy of the relevance of religion to life, and its constant stress on experience, as both the standard and the goal of religion. Liberalism rightly abhors the arbitrary, the unrelated, and the merely traditional or orthodox faith. Liberalism wants fact, reason, experience, and personal and social relevance.

The weaknesses of liberalism, oppositely, are a man-centered mood and method. When man's experience and reason are made final judges of truth, right and goodness, it is hard to find the absolute and eternal faith which judges and saves man. The standard for faith cannot center in man if it is to be a saving faith. Liberalism failed to see that the basic approach to method is not a matter of conflict between faith and reason as acts of man, but between revelation as God's act, and *both* faith and reason as man's

response. Liberalism also became greatly guilty of cultural accommodation, even of the accommodation of actions, whereas it should have discovered the imperative to transform the ways of the world by the power of the Word. As Forsyth passionately maintained, Liberalism centered too much in the world rather than in the Word. Because of its stress on continuity, liberalism lacked a principle and power of exclusion. It failed to see that there is no way at all from man to God because of the chasm between God and man, between Creator and derived being, between eternity as God's time and our kind of time, and it smoothed out by false theory the sharp differences between the Church and the world, and between the Christian Revelation and other religions. It had a much needed principle of inclusion, but failed to establish the principles of exclusion. In other words, its continuity was premature and sentimental. Besides, liberalism enervated the believer until he usually had no burning convictions and no imperious zeal for evangelism and missions.

B. The second kind of subjectivism is *existentialism*. By existentialism is meant primary emphasis on man's decision rather than on his ideas and experience. Existence precedes essence, and between them is a gulf unbridged by reason. Man has to think as a concrete occasion of experience with regard to his religious ultimate with his own human destiny hanging in the balance. Revelation comes through events, not through ideas. The choice of daring faith concerning these events alone affords revelation for the chooser. This approach is hard to nail down except by saying that it stems from Søren Kierkegaard, who made choice concerning one's eternal destiny the very passionate heart of faith, a choice made in the awesome terror of a darkness where there is neither an objective revelation nor a dependable reason in things religious. For him, subjectivity raised to its highest degree was truth, absurd and awful, offensive and foolish, yet life and peace for those who walk in its narrow Way.

Few have followed Kierkegaard the whole way. Yet he has influenced most alert modern thinkers, particularly in the field of religion. Rudolf Bultmann, perhaps Europe's leading religious thinker today, is deeply influenced by Kierkegaard through the philosopher Martin Heidegger. Probably the most highly respected theologian in the United States, Paul Tillich, has received into his thinking a large dose of existentialism. Both Bultmann and Tillich have, at least, rejected classical Christian supernaturalism as impossible in the face of a century of science. Tillich is a profound systematic thinker and relies on a correlation of philosophy and theology which presupposes the universality of the *logos*; but neither

by philosophy nor theology does he ever break the circle of subjectivity far enough to emerge into an objective Christian supernaturalism.

The strength of this position is obviously its modernity. The offense for today's educated man is the supernatural. Existentialism offers no hard affirmations, scandalous to a this-worldly naturalist. At the same time modern existentialism is wise enough to make heavy use of classical symbolism, particularly that of Christian theology. It *poses* as a return to a fuller and more real Christian faith, with the supposedly impossible superstructure of Christian supernaturalism sloughed off. It can speak of the resurrection of Jesus, for instance, without any reference to his resuscitation, to his being raised by God; and it can refer to our resurrection, even of the body, with no thought of personal life after death. It can speak of the necessity of eschatology, without having a unilinear view of time and without expecting any actual end of our history as such.

Existentialism is also more flexible than a faith based on a given external Revelation, entailing propositional truth and normative principles of ethics. As a matter of fact, Tillich can make self-criticism the very "principle of Protestantism." With regard to social criticism, existentialism is virtuously mobile. It never becomes a discontinuous minority, aiming at a kingdom not of this world, nor an idealistic social action group, striving for irrelevant "perfection." Existentialism is strongest, therefore, in the suits of modernity and freedom.

The weaknesses of existentialism—if we continue to employ this vague characterization for want of a better one—are the lack of effective supernaturalism; the fugitiveness of modernity; the lack of stability in social theory and criticism; and the absence of adequate ground for a doctrine of the church and Christian experience.

The Christian faith is indelibly supernatural. God is the Creator, Ruler, Judge, Savior and fulfiller of this world. Only in terms of life after death, *personal* life in a new dimension and eternal, does the Christian faith provide any hope at all commensurate with its promises. Reason and faith are both frustrated apart from Revelation, the actual incoming of the fulfilling news of God's purpose and Presence, over the long stretches of time and in the fullness of time. The gospel of modernity may be easy to accept but, being untrue, it lacks the power of the Gospel. This form of godliness cannot save. The knowledge of this world passes away, but the supernatural Word of God abides forever.

Flexibility is good, but not at the expense of the sameness and permanence of the Gospel. Even though rigid rational and moral prin-



ciples are of man's making and witness to his insecurity and are therefore to be rejected, there is a lasting pattern in the love of God whereby we are bid to imitate him (Eph. 5:1). This supernatural Revelation of God's love in Christ comes not only as a Person, but as a meaningful purpose both for life and civilization. This new way of living finds its embodiment in the Christian community. The Church is bid to enact and thus to exemplify the pattern for the new community. The Church can do so only when it consists of those actually born again into newness of life by the grace of God through faith in Christ. Existentialism lacks the supernatural dimension of Christian experience and of the Christian community. It knows no Holy Spirit who actually is the Lord of history as well as the Love of the Church, whereby God's holy providence directs the destinies of nations as it also guides consecrated lives.

### III

Fortunately I can point without hesitation to a Christian theology with full stress on both objectivity and subjectivity, and both within the organic necessity of truth. The Christian Revelation alone can provide the whole truth for life.

The Christian faith is grounded in the bedrock of *the historic Revelation*. The Christian faith therefore acknowledges a necessary mediate relation to God. This historic givenness of Revelation, however, has itself both an objective and a subjective side.

A. *The objective side* comprises God's own presence and work in the Christ-deed, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and the Bible. The Christ-deed is God's own incoming into human history as the Son. The Christian faith stands and falls with its affirmation not only of the power but of the presence of God in human form. In Jesus the God who is love has come, acted and spoken. Not that God was absent from history until Jesus came, but, rather, that then he came in matchless fullness as the turning point of all history. Then he came as eternity fulfilling time. The Christ-deed is God's act of Revelation and Redemption in the fullness of time. The universal, unconditional, sovereign Love, who is God, has come, acted and spoken for the salvation of all men that whosoever believes and lives this Gospel of God's love might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

The Holy Spirit, moreover, in one of his aspects, is God himself, God in the Church. As Jesus was born of Mary, yet became enmanned by God the Son, so the church has its own authentic human side, as a human com-

munity, while yet indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. Revelation at its most intimate and real is always, as Robert Barclay pointed out, by "the inward and objective Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit, like Christ, becomes organically, personally, united to the Christian community; Christ being the pattern, structure and substance of Love, while the Holy Spirit is God's energizing, whether for counseling, comforting, enlightening, sanctifying, assuring or establishing. Christ is ultimate to each new creature; the Holy Spirit is ultimate to the community of creatures in Christ. To receive Christ is to be born again as a new person, but also inevitably to be born into a new fellowship of the Spirit. Christ is the pattern of the unity of God *in* the individual believer and *for* the community of faith. The Holy Spirit is the energizer of Christ, the alpha and the omega of the new creature, for the fullness of self-being in Christ and in the Christian fellowship. The Holy Spirit is God *in* the Christian community and *for* each member of it. His presence and work are through and through objective, of God and not of man, but part and parcel also of man's new creaturehood in Christ and in the Church, thus also genuinely and inseparably the decisive aspect of man's new subjective situation, as an individual and as a social being.

Objective, too, is the Christian Church. It comes from God. It comes as God. It comes for man. As a human institution it is of man. It is man's response to God in the Christian community. Yet the Church is not made up, first of all, of man's response, but of God's gracious calling in Christ by the Spirit. The Christian Church is primarily God's presence and power for a new kind of community on the part of those who are new creatures in Christ. The Church is the extension of the Incarnation, of the Atonement and of the Resurrection, not as a self-sufficient prolongation of Christ nor as the vicar of Christ or substitute for him. It is Christ, present as "the head of the body." It is the contemporary Christ in human history. It is the Holy Spirit calling, winning and perfecting saints, those called by God and justified by him. It is Christ giving himself ever anew in a broken body and the shed blood. It is the Love who is God, caring in the Community of Concern. Still the Christ comes within the weaknesses of the flesh as the triumph of saving power, no longer in the physical body of Jesus, but now in the risen body of the universal Church, in those who know the reality of his universal love to save, to create and to promote community.

Besides the Christ-deed, the Holy Spirit and the Church, on the objective side of the Christian faith, there is also the Bible. The Bible is



an objective strand of history reporting man's response to God's Christ-deed, his sending of the Holy Spirit, and his founding of the Church. The Bible has its authority in the God who has thus acted to save mankind. The Bible is the exemplifying history of human experience interpreted by God's love in Christ. The Bible shows us God's preparation for the Christ-deed and the culminating revelation and redemption of man. When the Bible is read with dedicated intelligence as the living Word of God's universal love, we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "The truth as it is in Jesus" becomes our criterion of all truth and conduct, showing us both the nature and the will of God. The Bible becomes the objective rule of faith, the lamp for our feet, illumining the will and way of God with all men and for all times.

These four, the Christ-deed, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and the Bible, are the four objective factors of the Christian faith in history that are permanently valid. They are the mediating realities through which we come to God. They determine whether our faith is genuinely Christian and therefore fully in line with truth.

B. Four are the objective factors of God's revelation; there are also four *subjective factors* to be taken into account. The first of these is the response of the original faith-witnesses. They were real and free human beings reporting as best they knew. Because they responded as finite human beings, touched with sin, to the holy facts of God's saving presence and mighty acts, the biblical record shows us the absolute truth, but not absolutely. Even as the Son came incognito in order to preserve our freedom to find God in the fullness of experience—including after his coming, however, his very presence in human history—even so the holy Book comes not as an errorless compulsion confronting finite man, but as the saving fullness of objective reality touched with the foibles and fallibilities of the original faith-witnesses. The Truth to which they testified is altogether and absolutely true; the way in which they testified to that truth was by reporting what they saw and heard as they saw, heard and remembered it over a history of oral tradition and fallible transmission of writings. The reality of the fullness of God's saving love in his Son, his universal concern for all men, thrusts itself upon all who are ready to accept and to walk in the light of the holy Incarnation, but amidst secondary contradictions and misinterpretations due to the subjective failings, both of life and light, on the part of the early disciples.

Secondly, the Church as the community of confirmation has not made sharp and constant the one and only criterion of God in Christ as holy and

universal Love. There is a whole history of subjective response to God's historic Revelation. The original errors of the first faith-witnesses have persisted as part of the holy tradition along with the holy Gospel. The chaff has never been winnowed from the wheat. These errors and misinterpretations have accumulated in Christian history, due to the subjective and fallible nature of our response, and have become solidified in Christian theology, particularly as this has become expressed in terms of alien philosophies and divergent world-views. The community of confirmation transmits through history the reality of the Gospel, man's constantly vertical relation to God in acceptance, forgiveness, and fulfillment, but the confirmation has been through a glass darkly, a situation which has made it possible for many to worship the shadows as the Light, either because they prefer the darkness to the Light or because no one has trained them to distinguish what is truly light from darkness. The whole history of confirmation has been a history conditioned by a subjective response on the part of the believing community to God's objective acts of salvation.

Thirdly, our present knowing the historic Christian faith, the work once wrought by the Holy Spirit, is subjectively conditioned. How we know it, depends upon the quality of our own response, both in intensity and in the kind of faith which is ours. Only already translated saints could respond perfectly to God's historic deeds in Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and the Bible. We therefore must be humble about our own reception and interpretation. Our witness to others of our holy faith must be humbled by the consciousness of the forgiveness of our sins and of our failings as finite men. However absolute God's part in the historic revelation, there is always our human side to it which is both relative and clouded by sin.

In the fourth place, man's creative response to God's objective self-disclosure is also subjective. History presents new situations. Revelation cannot be repeated exactly as it came. History requires constant choice, the relating of the old to the new. The Church is not only the community of confirmation, but also, in some sense, a community of experimentation. History demands new thought. The new, too, while unavoidable, is always dangerous. We men are sinful and finite, and as such we handle the immortal message of God's redeeming love. We sometimes essay being creative without first being triumphantly redeemed or without being fully in the service of the Holy Spirit. The finiteness we cannot avoid; sin also besets us too easily. Therefore as the contemporary community of experimentation we actually impose a subjective element on the

Gospel we present. Only a few keep close enough to Christ and are sufficiently trained to follow anew "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith," and even they judge as creatures, not as God himself.

There is, thus, the mediate relation to God, presupposing the historic Christ-deed, the Holy Spirit's work up to now, the Christian Church as the community of confirmation and as the community of experimentation, and the Bible. All of these involve objective and subjective factors of God's work and man's response. Without these mediate relations there is no Christianity. The Christian faith is a historic reality with which we have to do. It claims nothing less than the revelation and saving activity of the absolute God. Therefore to accept the Christian faith is to renounce all other faiths as either inadequate or false at heart. There can be only one absolute Revelation, in whatever way God's wider work in nature and history be afterwards related to that Revelation.

#### IV

Nevertheless, the Christian faith is not merely *mediate*. It worships a living God. Man's basic relation in life is to God. The horizontal direction is ever under the vertical. Jesus knew that God is Spirit and must be worshiped *immediately* in Spirit and in truth. The four objective factors in history must therefore become objective for *present* experience, structuring God's immediate Revelation. The Christian faith lives by such encounter of the Living God. The historic faith mediates the content of the Christian experience, even as what we now experience could never be interpreted for what it is apart from the history of our experience. The Christian faith is *mediated immediacy*.

Therefore God must reveal himself ever afresh in the Christ-men. The living Christ is God as Son conclusively fulfilling those who understand and accept him. God must become Christ in us "the hope of glory." He who once came to fulfill his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus must keep coming to fill full that purpose by his ingression organically—redemptively and creatively—into all men. Man finds fulfillment only when God becomes his true subject. The human self is not eliminated or curtailed by God's taking complete possession of it, but is fulfilled and made free. We are made for God and for his community; the more passive we are to him, therefore, the more active we become and the more real as human selves. The more we resist him the more we are slaves to what is alien to our deepest selves. Therefore God must continue his holy Incarnation to express himself and to finish in glory his own creation.

God also will enter us as the Holy Spirit, the guide and energizer of our new life in Christ. Christ is the perfect fulfillment of God's purpose for us and of our human natures. The Holy Spirit is the intimate companionship of God within that new relationship. We are not only born again by the revolutionary entrance of Christ in our lives, making us new creatures in him, but we are also allowed to grow in grace and in the fruit of the Spirit by means of the present objective work of God the Holy Spirit.

The Church also becomes in the present the creator of creeds, not the mumblers or even repeaters of them. A creed is not Christian if it is other than a symbol which directs faith. Such a symbol is existential, the mediating context of an immediate confrontation. The early Councils wrote afresh the creeds. They were creative of new and better insight, as well as defensive of false directions for faith and practice. Dark years and deadened periods of history imprisoned faith within the contexts of the past, putting the living heart of confession within the corpse of formulation. The throbbing life of commitment which once created a symbol to match its information and decision became embalmed within the cadaver of a former faith. God must work ever afresh to write creative creeds that free the spirit, match its present knowledge, and serve as the occasion for its fullest commitment. The creed is Christian only when it is the declaratory statement of contemporary worship and theology. Although it structures faith, it is expressed by it creatively, not imposed upon it.

The Bible, too, is living Light. Too often the Bible is only a book; dead fuel never catching fire. The Bible mediates God's objective self-revelation as the Son. There can be no other Revelation that is real and final than God as holy Love, conclusively and universally concerned for all men and able to the uttermost. Yet such a God is present *now* as the Author of his living Word, lighting ever fresh candles. The Bible cannot become a closed canon without denying the Christian faith at its very heart: that God lives and encounters us now for our salvation and that prayer and worship are no empty rituals but living relations to the One Lord. The Bible is God's living speech to men, and therefore the Bible is buried in mediacy unless it is resurrected in the immediacy of present Revelation for contemporary needs. Revelation is not limited by mediacy, but is ever open to the illimitable truth of God. God still publishes his Word, will publish it to the end of time, and great should be the company of them that publish it!

There are, then, the following four objective immediate Revelations

of God in the present: (1) His revelations through the God-men of every today; (2) through the Holy Spirit, not merely as a decisive event on Pentecost, but as God the present Guide into all truth; (3) through the Church as the real Presence in human history of the new creatures in the eternal Son of God and as the continuing community of the newborn, and (4) through the Bible as God's living speech in direct experience, the kind of speech which generated the written Word.

The subjective side of this objective immediacy of God as Universal Love we may think of particularly, for our purposes, in terms of our response for one world in Christ. God wants to make of one spirit all the divided men of human history. He wants to create true, unlimited community to the utmost of our allowance. He never compels fellowship, but, as we let him, he breaks down barriers of religion, race and nature, and unites men in the unity which is ever creative diversity. Our side is to be open and effective channels of communication for the grace of God, whether on the level of creation or on the level of redemption.

He also wants intensively to renew the whole social order with his healing freshness. Our opportunity in this sphere is to consecrate to him our every talent and attention. Every vocation under God becomes a divine calling. God today is calling plumbers and preachers, economists and politicians, educators and housewives to work away, each in his own way, to make a new social order. With cobalt bombs and computing machines, with jet planes and television, with general education and specialized social engineering, this job is too big for any of us and for us all!—except we remember well and believingly that ours is only the subjective side of the great objective acts of God which have made this new world possible.

Our response is even more for the *celestial* oneness of the whole company of God on earth. The Holy Spirit is one, and all in him are one. Therefore the present divisions and competitive wastes in church life are due to man's refusal to own the Holy Spirit. Sectarianism denies Christ. We cannot picture the creative nature of the Church which the Holy Spirit can effect, but we can accept him and start to build within his creative design. He will himself unfold it, if with all our lives we dare to trust him for a new day of cooperative concern for all men. Man is made for the Christian kind of community, for freedom and faithfulness in fellowship based on Christ's love, and made possible only by that love. Subjective is our response, and we weary quickly except as we usher out into the great unknown of God's creative will within the peace and power of the Holy Spirit.

We need also the eschatological response to God's creative Bible, the Bible of Contemporary Revelation read towards the future. What God has done in the past is recorded for our decision *in* the present *for* the future. The Bible, past and present, must be released as the full pattern of God's love for man within which we can creatively discover the unity of truth, for all life and thought, both theoretical and living, but only on the widest possible screen of what God is about to do to conclude all things in heaven and on earth in Christ.

We need, then, in conclusion, a Christ-centered evangelical supernaturalism, based on Revelation found only by faith, generating and sustaining freedom, open to reason and using it fully, energized by the Holy Spirit of truth and concern for the individual and for society, made conclusive in Christian community, which lives to the glory of God and finds fulfillment only within his will. Against such a faith, alive in love, firm in God and flexible within the humility of human finiteness, no power of evil can prevail. Such a faith has been given once for all as our own holy heritage. Let us arise to take full possession of it!



*From Paul Tillich*

NELS FERRÉ in the preceding article emphasizes "the need for a deeper American theology." After having reviewed different contemporary theologies, he proposes a solution which he starts with the sentence: "Fortunately I can point without hesitation to a Christian theology with full stress on both objectivity and subjectivity and both within the organic necessity of truth." This is certainly a high claim, as Dr. Ferré himself feels when he adds: "The Christian Revelation alone can provide the whole truth of life." These statements lead necessarily to the question: Is the Christian Revelation, or is the theological understanding of this Revelation the subject matter of the article and of theology? According to the title it is obviously the theological understanding of the Revelation. But if this is the case, the claim of a theologian that the theology he outlines is completely balanced and that it stands "within the organic necessity of truth" is much too high a claim for *any* theology.

In his first part the author lines up the contemporary theologies in two series, the one which he calls objectivistic and the other which he calls subjectivistic. Now "subject" and "object" are philosophical concepts with a long and intriguing history. Therefore, if these concepts are used in a scholarly way, one must ask: In which realm of reality are they contrasted and what is their precise meaning in this realm? In physics "subjectivity" means arbitrary interference with methodological research; in history it can mean the same, but it also can mean "understanding;" in theology it means participation with one's whole being. Ferré calls the "liberal theology" subjectivistic. But it would be at least equally justified to call it unduly objectivistic, especially in its reliance upon the scientific research into the "life of Jesus." In this respect Barth's theology is subjectivistic, insofar as the faith which for him mediates the revelation is an act of self-surrendering subjectivity, in the sense in which Kierkegaard uses the term. But neither Kierkegaard nor the Existentialists (including this reviewer) can be subsumed under the category of the "subjective." Existentialism describes correctly, and in this sense "objectively," the human predicament. In doing so it has rediscovered elements of classical theology which had been lost by liberal theology, both in its

---

PAUL TILlich, Ph.D., D.D., L.H.D., is University Professor at Harvard and the Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts; he teaches a general course in Religion and Culture, and lectures at the Divinity School in Systematic Theology.

idealistic and in its naturalistic form. Existentialism deals with the estranged human subject and his world, but that does not make it subjectivistic. The reality of contemporary theology cannot be grasped by the terms "objective" and "subjective," especially not if used without qualifications.

In his criticism of existentialist theology, Dr. Ferré gives it credit for its ability to make itself understandable to the modern mind; but he limits this credit by pointing to the transitoriness of every theology which is tied up with a special philosophy. To this criticism I want to say, first, that it is the function of theology to make the Christian message understandable to every new generation and that there is no eternal theology.

Secondly, it must be emphasized that existentialism is not a philosophy, in the sense of the changing systems of philosophy. There is no existentialist system. In the moment in which the existentialists become constructive they turn to other traditions, be it humanist or mystical or pietistic or orthodox ones. Existentialism is a matter of questions, not of answers. It raises the question of man's estrangement and possible reconciliation. But its positive answers are not existentialist.

In the second part of his article Dr. Ferré develops his system of theology, which is striking by its lack of theology. The classical tradition within which the author counts himself uses the logos, the power of conceptualization, courageously and thoroughly! The early Fathers, the scholastics, the Protestant Orthodoxies, Schleiermacher and Ritschl were not afraid of the logos. They all asked: *What does it mean*, if we say that God *is*, that the world is fallen, that Jesus is the Christ, that there is reconciliation? They did not accept the symbols without trying to interpret them in "logical" words. Even the mystery of the Trinity was interpreted in this way by Augustine. I do not see that Dr. Ferré has taken this function of theology seriously enough. He uses the traditional Christian terms, wrongly assuming that we know the range and the limits of their meaning without a full, conceptually strict investigation.

Certainly, every real Christian is gripped by the power of the biblical words and even of the classical creedal statements of the Church. They mediate something to him that is more important than logical understanding. And nobody can be a theologian who is not gripped in this way by the Christian message. But it is not enough for the theologian to repeat these terms and to relate them to each other. His task is to understand, even if understanding means methodologically pointing to the limits of understanding. Much insight is needed in order to see the mystery in its right place, and not to use it as the way of escaping dangerous questions.



There is *one* theological (or philosophical) concept used by Dr. Ferré in order to characterize his theology, the word "supernaturalism." He accuses existential theologians of a "lack of effective supernaturalism," and positively states: "The Christian faith is indelibly supernatural," and "The supernatural Word of God abides forever." The term "supernatural" has, like the terms "subjective" and "objective," many different meanings. One can use it for man's spiritual life, for his historical existence, for the realm of pure essences. But neither of these possible connotations is meant, if one speaks of supernaturalism. One wants to guarantee the freedom of God from the world and his power over the world. This is a justified concern, and I would agree with Dr. Ferré if he wanted to emphasize this point. But supernaturalism is meant by him in a quite different sense. It is meant as the affirmation of a world above the given world, a divine supra-world with special structures and qualities. God is in this supra-world, though not confined to it. He works in our world, appearing in it in special manifestations, interfering with its processes, sending his Son into it, directing it toward a moment of the temporal process in which he will annihilate it, except for those who have been and will be taken into the supra-world for an endless continuation of life beyond death.

Nobody can deny that the Christian symbolism in Bible and Church supports this view, and that it favors an intensive religiosity and a feeling of an intimate personal relation with the Divine Being—as impressively manifest in the writings and speeches of the author. But the theologian cannot accept the restatement of the Christian symbols as a theological answer. He is aware of the problems implied in each of the symbols mentioned above. He must reject the attempt to take these symbols literally. He must try to interpret them, also for our generation. He must, above all, understand the symbolic character of the supernaturalistic language of religion. It is not this *language* which is dangerous. It is the natural language of religion. But a *theology* is dangerous, which, in the name of the logos, takes this language literally; because it makes the infinite finite, the eternal temporal, the Divine One part of a universe which consists of two parts, subjecting it to the structures of being which, like fate in the Homeric religion, determine the actions and the destiny of the gods. Where the myth is taken literally, God is less than the ultimate, he is less than the subject of ultimate concern, he is not God in the infinite and unconditional sense of the great commandment.

This is my question addressed to the author of the article: "Where do we go from here in theology?"

*From Cornelius Van Til*

DR. FERRÉ represents the best in modern theology and he represents it well. In his present effort to deal fairly with each school of thought, he has some strictures to make on liberalism: "When man's experience and reason are made final judges of truth, right and goodness, it is hard to find the absolute and eternal faith which judges and saves man." We need, he says, "a Christ-centered evangelical supernaturalism." On the other hand, he has some good things to say about fundamentalism. It represents, he says, "for the most part, a continuation of classical Christianity" and shows an "unwavering allegiance to supernatural Christianity." Are we, then, to have a theology that is "beyond Fundamentalism and Modernism," but in which Fundamentalism can keep the substance of its faith, while liberalism also preserves its own values? That is what Dr. Ferré seems to desire.

I

But on the basis of Dr. Ferré's article and his other writings, the fundamentalist must ask: What may we be permitted to retain as the substance of our faith?

(1) Will we be allowed to believe that the Bible, in its original manuscripts, is the Word of God? Ferré answers that "literalism" is a hindrance to faith. He argues that if we would proclaim the true gospel we must not barricade ourselves behind a book. Absolute authority, he says, "cannot appear in absolute historic form without freezing history."<sup>1</sup> Ferré thus rejects the basic position of classical Christianity to the effect that in the Bible men have a direct and final revelation of God.

(2) Will we then, continues the fundamentalist, at least be permitted to hold to our doctrine of God as "a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth"?

The answer is again in the negative. Ferré contends that "all the attributes of God are now essential and relational at the same time. God has no time of isolation before creation; being now enjoys no status of

<sup>1</sup> Ferré, N. F. S., *Christianity and Society*, Harper & Brothers, 1950, p. 104.

---

CORNELIUS VAN TIL, Th.M., Ph.D., is Professor of Christian Apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and is author of *The Defense of the Faith*, Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia.

priority over becoming." Creation is therefore "as intrinsic to God's nature as His very being."<sup>2</sup> Ferré thus rejects the basic position of classical Christianity with respect to God. For Ferré God does not exist separate from the process of the universe.

(3) Less confident, the fundamentalist now asks: May we then not continue to profess that "the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever?"

The reply is once more in the negative. As he does not separate God from the process of the cosmos, so for him the divine nature of Christ has no attributes that make it basically distinct from his human nature. For the idea of the Chalcedon creed that Christ is a divine person Ferré frankly substitutes the idea that he is a human person. "His personality began in his mother's womb and through all eternity continues separately as a personality of human origin and of created status."<sup>3</sup> Accordingly the Christ of Ferré is only gradationally, not qualitatively, distinct from other men. The "exceptional in Jesus is what most fully exemplifies our own potential nature and destiny."<sup>4</sup> Thus Ferré also rejects the historic Christian doctrine of the person of Christ.

(4) With increasing hesitation the fundamentalist now asks: May I then retain anything of the classical Christian doctrine of the work of Christ that he came to do for man? May I say that "Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us"?

Naturally Ferré's answer is once more "no." Since the Creator does not exist separate from the process of his creation, he is not the law-giver to man. Sin is therefore not to be defined as "any want of conformity unto or breaking of the law of God." Sin is rather "the perverted thwarting of our most basic needs and of our most serious longings."<sup>5</sup> Thus the suffering of Christ is not substitutionary but exemplary. "The uniqueness of Jesus was in his being the irreversible exception who yet exemplifies what is most potential in us all and in God's total purpose."<sup>6</sup> Thus history

<sup>2</sup> *The Christian Understanding of God*, Harper & Brothers, 1951, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>5</sup> *Evil and the Christian Faith*, Harper & Brothers, 1947, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> *The Christian Understanding of God*, p. 203.

is self-atoning. God through Christ is in history and sees to it that universal love shall prevail among all men at last.

Dr. Ferré's idea of the work of Christ is, therefore, clearly opposed to the orthodox view of the work of Christ. His view of God and of the person and work of Christ are naturally of a piece. As such they are radically opposed to the classical Christian view of God and of the person and work of Christ.

(5) Finally, though very hesitatingly now, the fundamentalist asks: How about the consummation of history? Is there to be a final judgment day? May I continue to confess that "the end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient"?

The answer is more emphatically in the negative than ever. Ferré argues that the justice of God is completely in the service of his love. All punishment, he says, is remedial. The "translating and transpowering role of the Spirit" includes all mankind. "There may be many hells. There may be enough freedom even in the life of hell for man to keep rejecting God for a very long time. Hell may be not only unto the end of the age, but also unto the end of several ages. It cannot be eternal, but it can be longer than we think."<sup>7</sup> The idea of an eternal separation between those who are saved and those who are lost, as fundamentalism believes it, is, according to Ferré, basically hostile to the moral consciousness of man.

It is now clear that on Ferré's view the fundamentalist cannot really retain anything of what he himself considers to be the substance of Christianity. All the answers of the Shorter Catechism would have to be "reinterpreted" beyond recognition if they were to express a theology such as Ferré recommends. The basic difference between the Creator and the creature has to be rejected. For it is to be substituted the idea of a Reality in process, including God and man. And this view of an all-encompassing process is based on human experience as self-explanatory instead of upon the Bible as the Word of God.

## II

It is, of course, great gain to have seen this contrast clearly. The modern and the classical Christian position are diametrically opposed to one another. They differ at every point because they differ in their root

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

principles. It is not that one view lays more stress on reason and the other on faith, that one is more God-centered and the other more man-centered. Both seek to combine faith and reason. Both believe in God as well as in man. Both are Christ-centered. Both believe in the love and grace of God. But all along the line the connotations of these terms are mutually exclusive of one another. And it is not a matter of difference at the point of theology alone.

Involved in each position is a philosophy of science as well as of theology. Involved in each is a philosophy of fact as well as of methodology. Two mutually comprehensive views, built upon mutually exclusive presuppositions stand over against one another. Both are aware of the fact that "the ultimate is necessarily the ground for explaining all else, but cannot itself be explained by anything else."<sup>8</sup>

But if such is the case, is there then any basis for fruitful discussion between the two? To seek for a point of contact in some neutral ground is futile. The starting point, the method and the conclusion of the modern theologian are involved in one another. The same is true for the believer in historic Christianity. Moreover, for the fundamentalist an appeal to neutral territory is fatal. For the idea of "neutrality" implies the idea that abstract possibility is above God, that the Universe, or Reality, inclusive of God and man, is "open." And this is precisely the process philosophy to which the modern theologian adheres.

Instead of seeking for a neutral point of contact in the way Roman Catholic apologists do, the Protestant should place himself for the sake of the argument upon the position of the modern view.

It then appears that in the modern view two principles, that of pure irrationalism and pure contingency and that of pure rationalism and pure determinism, are kept in balance with one another. On the one hand pure irrationalism and contingency imply the impossibility of distinguishing one fact from another. Even mere counting of facts becomes impossible because counting presupposes a discernible difference between one fact and another fact. On the other hand pure rationalism and pure determinism imply the impossibility of using the law of contradiction fruitfully in relation to facts. Granted that facts could be found they would, as soon as the principle of contradiction is applied to them, congeal into one block of being. All logic would be purely formal or analytic, as all factuality would be purely contingent.

<sup>8</sup> *Christianity and Society*, p. 8.

Thus there would be no system at all, or all would always have been systematized. Science would be impossible. Human experience would be meaningless. If the individual speaks it is, alas, no longer the individual that speaks. These general remarks may now be applied to Ferré's view. Though opposed to all forms of naturalism his own view is still a process philosophy.

On the one hand Ferré's principle of discontinuity leads to pure contingency and irrationalism. His "Jesus" is so completely immersed in the process of history and the evil that is part of history as to be unable to do anything in the way of saving men at all. Why should he be spoken of as "the first-born among many brethren?" Why should he even be held up as an example to men? Ferré cannot tell us how his Jesus is God or even knows God.

It is no wonder then that Ferré's primary concern is "not validity but adequacy." We operate, he says, from "the central meaning we see" by the "self-authenticating illumination of the spirit." "The deepest solutions, anyway, are not in thought but in the spirit."<sup>9</sup> His faith in God is purely irrational. His view is based on vision. When he says that we *know* "the God of perfect power and perfect love" and that this God "will perfect with all certainty that which He has here barely begun" this "knowledge" is naught but beatific vision that has no intelligible relation to the historic scene. We cannot, on his basis, "take off" from the level of historic fact to God at all.

On the other hand Ferré's principle of continuity leads to pure identity between God and man. According to this principle there is no need to "take off" from historic fact in order to reach God. And there is no need for Jesus as an exception, as the "selective actual" in order to lead men to their Creator. It is because men already have the criterion of true love within them that they chose Jesus to represent them. "Continuity from below takes on continuity from above, but this continuity is itself continuous from God down."<sup>10</sup> The Spirit of God is operative in all things from the beginning. In human freedom, "the highest stage of discontinuity" is "looked at from the opposite perspective . . . God's highest continuity."<sup>11</sup> Human freedom of necessity spells sin. But the *Must* of sin is absorbed by a bigger, all-encompassing and all-compelling *Must* of grace. All men inevitably participate fully at last because all

<sup>9</sup> *Evil and the Christian Faith*, p. 107.

<sup>10</sup> *The Christian Understanding of God*, p. 137.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.



men have always participated potentially in the idea of God as universal love. Thus does Ferré's principle of continuity lead to blank identity.

Of course the two principles, that of pure continuity and that of pure identity, never appear thus baldly by themselves. There is a "dynamic synthesis" between them. Pure equivocism and pure univocism are kept in solution. But underneath this "dynamic synthesis" there is hidden the dilemma that either one knows nothing and can ask no questions or one knows everything and need ask no questions.

### III

In conclusion it is well to fix our attention on this dilemma as it shows itself in its stark nakedness when he deals with man's knowledge of God.

On the one hand there is the frank and avowed profession that man can know nothing about the Absolute. It is said that "mere fact decides nothing about the nature of the absolute." What one believes about the Ultimate is therefore, in the last analysis, a matter of pure, that is irrational, faith. Any god we *know* is finite. The absolute God, one on whom all our "objectivity" rests, is a projection. Such a God is indeterminate.

On the other hand there is the frank and avowed profession that man does know the Absolute. And there is the assumption that man knows all about him.

There is first the universal negative assertion about the nature of God implied in Ferré's rejection of fundamentalism. The facts of history, of logic, and of human moral experience are said to make the fundamentalist idea of God obviously impossible. It is thus assumed to be the easiest possible thing for man to say that God is not eternal and unchangeable in his being and properties.

There is, secondly, the universal positive assertion about the nature of God implied in Ferré's acceptance of God as unconditional Agape. Faith in this God is said to be knowledge of this God. And any "knowledge" not based on this knowledge is said to be inferior or false knowledge. Various forms of naturalism as well as older liberalism are rejected because their view of knowledge is not based on this all-encompassing Absolute. Thus the facts of history are on the one hand said to tell us nothing about God and on the other hand to tell us all about God. These facts are said to point nowhere, and at the same time absolutely away from the God of fundamentalism and toward the God of the modern

theologian. Such procedure is unintelligible and destructive of the very experience upon which it is supposed to rest. But such a procedure would seem to be the only alternative once the classical Christian position is set aside.

Classical Christianity presupposes the existence of God as self-sufficient. It holds that this God has created the universe and by his providence controls it. All the facts of the universe are what they are, ultimately, because of the place that they occupy in history as the realization of the plan of God. All facts, therefore, clearly point toward God. In particular does the constitution of man as made in the image of God point toward its original. Every man unavoidably knows God (Rom. 1:19-21). Self-consciousness presupposes God-consciousness.

But because of sin every man seeks to suppress the truth about himself. The sinner does not want to meet his creator. The natural man holds down the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). He is spiritually blind (Eph. 4:18). Unless on the basis of Christ's work in his "room and stead" the Holy Spirit regenerates him, the sinner will not repent and accept the truth. Challenged each day by the face of God as impressed on each fact that he sees, not the least on those that he himself discovers, he always rationalizes his unbelief.

On the other hand those who do believe do so not because they are morally superior to others; faith is the gift of grace. Being saved by grace they realize that all their "strong reasons" for not believing were at bottom futile. It was a kicking against the pricks, a rationalization of man's rebellion against God. Even to deny this God intelligently, one has to presuppose him. Only whole response to this God saves the whole man.



*From Alden Drew Kelley*

GREATLY welcomed should be the effort of Nels Ferré to explore the frontiers of an ecumenical theology. No more urgent task confronts the Christian theologian today. In both charity and courage, he has essayed to delineate the dominant contemporary trends and to expose their respective limitations. As we have learned to expect from Dr. Ferré, this has been done with a firm but delicate touch. There is always an evident artistry in the balanced composition, depth of perspective, and luminous detail of his work.

Surely commendable is the insistence that a truly ecumenical theology must be both "objective" *and* "subjective"; be grounded in Revelation *and* responded to in both faith and reason; be expressive of both the doctrines of Cr  ation *and* Redemption; and related both vertically to the Eternal God *and* horizontally to history, past, present, and future. There is manifested throughout Dr. Ferr  's discussion a conscientious desire to explicate fully the "both-and" character of our Christian theological tradition as over against the inevitable distortions and classical heresies of the "either-or" approach.

It does, then, seem somewhat unfortunate that the author fails to appreciate that the various Christian traditions which he criticizes would, given the opportunity, equally reject the "either-or" category and with conviction declare their adherence to the principle of "both-and." All of them without exception would be convinced that their particular emphases did render full justice to the "objective"-*"subjective,"* to Revelation-response in faith and reason, to Creation-Redemption, and to time-eternity.

Moreover, the implications of the first two sentences at the beginning of Part III would seem to be that previously described viewpoints were not really Christian and failed to place "full stress on both objectivity and subjectivity."

In view of this evident astigmatism, one is impelled to examine a little more closely the author's view of our theological landscape and the rather abstractionist painting which is offered as a true picture of reality. In fact, there is discernible some confirmation of one's suspicion that basically the author's position is not so much "Where do we go from here?"

---

ALDEN DREW KELLEY, M.A., S.T.D., D.D., is President and Dean of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois; member of the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity.

as "What do we go back to?" The answer appears to be within the general tradition of Protestant pietism.

Much may be said for the contribution that pietistic thought and devotion has made in the long history of Christianity. But it is difficult to believe that that particular strand of theological emphasis is the wave of the future in ecumenical theology. Certainly, it will be *one* element, if for no other reason than its enormous and widespread influence particularly on American Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant.

Here a paragraph from Daniel Jenkins may be to the point.

The extent of the influence of Pietism and the closely related movement of Revivalism on the development of Protestantism in both America and Britain, and through them on the consciousness of large sections of the population of the modern world, has still been inadequately estimated. . . . It reacted against the coldness and formalism and intellectualism of Post-Reformation religion by a strong emphasis on the warmth and tenderness of the personality of Jesus and on the need for a spontaneous act of conversion as the individual's response to Him. It stimulated a strong sense of fellowship among the members of a particular religious group, but it was a fellowship among those concerned chiefly for the cultivation of the internal life of individuals, the so-called "spiritual life." This was suspicious of institutionalism because it might quench the Spirit and it had little conception of the Church as a permanent society with a divinely ordained form and a public responsibility for the Christian ordering of all parts of the common life of believers. . . .

These movements [Pietism and Revivalism] have had the great virtue of possessing terrific evangelistic power. They have produced more new Christians than any other form of church life in the modern world. . . . But they have produced Christians with a very undeveloped conception of the Church. This is partly because of the emotional and individualistic attitude toward religion which we have seen them to possess. It is also partly because they were either cut off from the rich traditions of older-established churches concerning the relation between the Church and the Gospel or knew those traditions only in most unsympathetic forms. . . .

The attitude was understandable, and that it should have arisen was a grave reproach to those who belonged to the more mature churches. But it is seen in increasingly wide circles today to be dangerously naïve and false to the plain import of Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

To be explicit, we have doubts as to the possibility of acceptance by those Christian bodies in the World Council of Churches which are within the historic and orthodox Christian tradition, of a number of the author's suggested points.

1. The apparent inclusion under the one category of "objective factors in history" of the "Christ-deed" (i.e., the Incarnation), the Holy Spirit, the Church, and the Bible. Ordinarily the Second and Third Persons of

<sup>1</sup> Jenkins, D., *The Strangeness of the Church*. Doubleday & Company, Christian Faith Series, 1955, pp. 18-20 *passim*.

the Trinity have been regarded as "uncreated" existences even though their activities in the world are historically conditioned. Church and Bible are purely historical and contingent realities.

2. It does not seem adequate to think of God as Love only. Is he not Power also? Is he not the God of Nature as well as of History? Is the tradition of Calvin to be ignored entirely in favor of that of Luther?

3. There appears to be a profound ambiguity in the author's view of the "Christ-deed" and the Holy Spirit, who seem to be both decisive events and continuing historical processes.

4. It is unsatisfactory to describe the Church functionally as primarily a "creed-making" group or the Bible as "God's living speech in direct experience, the kind of speech which generated the written Word." The Church, the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the Family of God, is not exhausted in meaning by the concept of "creed-making"; and, in some sense, the canon of Scripture is closed even though it speaks relevantly to our immediate existential situation.

Perhaps Dr. Ferré's difficulties arise from the failure to give full weight to the radical discontinuities, the unique unrepeatable decisive events, which are the mighty works of God in history. The Christian myth is not merely a symbol for continuing historical processes. It has a vertical dimension and is a referent to the timeless.

Just here we might direct our attention to Section B of Part I, which sets forth a critical analysis of "the High Church wing of Christianity." With a great deal of it we must agree. But it says both too much and too little. Included under the category of "High Church" would be not only Anglicanism but also certain Lutheran groups, some Presbyterians and other "reformed" Churches, the Old Catholics of Europe, the Polish National Catholics of the U.S.A., the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and the so-called "lesser" ancient churches of the East; all members of the World Council of Churches. The two paragraphs are hardly adequate as descriptive of the strengths and weaknesses of such a heterogeneous grouping.

It is not easy to reconcile the criticism offered by Dr. Ferré with the following words from an address by Andreas Rinkel, Archbishop of Utrecht:

Our Lord founded the "Church" and not an institution with rules, laws, functions (liturgical, ceremonial) and ministering personnel all exactly defined in advance. His Gospel proclaims the realization of the Kingdom of God, and the external form of the Church is only a means to that end—but a means which He Himself gives, inescapable and indispensable, absolutely necessary for all those who want to attain

to His Salvation. So too the Gospel contains the principles which establish the Ministry though without ministerial prescriptions, and the principles which call forth the means of grace, though without liturgical description. He founded a living organism, not an organization, not a constitutional law.

Along the same line of thought one may refer to the *Declaration of the Orthodox Delegates Concerning Faith and Order*, which was delivered at a plenary session of the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

The whole of the Christian Faith should be regarded as one, indivisible unity. It is not enough to accept just certain, particular doctrines as basic as they may be in themselves, e.g. that Christ is God and Saviour. It is compelling that all doctrines as formulated by the Ecumenical Councils, as well as the totality of all teaching of the Early, Undivided Church, would be accepted. One cannot be satisfied with formulas which are isolated from the life and experience of the Church. They must be assessed and understood within the context of the Church's life.

Far from being characterized by an "offish exclusiveness" and an antipathy to "inclusiveness" as suggested by Dr. Ferré, the problem of the Orthodox Churches is basically their insistence on "the total, dogmatic Faith of the Early Undivided Church without either subtraction or alteration," to quote again from the same document of Declaration. The proponent of an ecumenical theology is faced with the colossal task of assimilating, or at least with nice discrimination doing justice to, a closely knit and coherent philosophico-theological apparatus or construct. It is a big lump to swallow even for the most Catholic-minded in the tradition of the Reformed Churches.

Turning now to the churches of the Lutheran tradition, we may well consider the paragraph set forth by Gustaf Aulén in *This Is the Church*, edited by Anders Nygren.

Luther is a man of surprises. We hear him thundering against the pope in drastic phrases. For instance, we hear him say that the pope dispenses "his offal and poison, a doctrine of men, but he neglects the gospel, yes, he even persecutes it, because it does not serve him!" We hear him say how the sacrament is misused and distorted, and how the hierarchy transgresses. We should naturally expect the result to be a radical rejection of the Roman Church. But on the contrary, in the next instant we hear that the Roman Church is holy, and all its episcopal offices are holy, and, . . . the reason for this holiness of the Roman Church is that in it are still found "baptism, the sacrament, the Word of the Gospel, the Holy Scriptures, the church's offices, the name of Christ and the name of God." In passing we point out that when he here speaks of the "name" of Christ and of God, he does not mean only that God and Christ are named, but, as the context shows, that God and Christ are actually at work in the church. . . .

The factors which effect and condition the holiness of the church also effect

and condition its unity at the same time. Christ works through the Word, the sacrament, and the ministry. Abuse and misinterpretation, however fateful, cannot forestall his acting.<sup>2</sup> Where Christ is, there is the church on earth as one holy and universal church.

Perhaps even more striking, for some, would be the plea for toleration, "Christian inclusiveness," a charitable openness, by E. L. Mascall, a noted Anglo-Catholic theologian of Christ Church, Oxford.

We ought at all costs to avoid that theological and liturgical purism which assumes that to our own age and to it alone God has granted a fully integrated and perfectly balanced comprehension of the revelation given to the Church in Christ. Nevertheless, it may well be . . . that we are now in a better position than Christendom has been in any time in the last four hundred (or perhaps in the last sixteen hundred) years to recover something of that wholeness of outlook which, however imperfectly, characterised primitive Christianity. And if we, as Western Christians, are to make this attempt we must be more ready than we have commonly been to call in question the attitudes and formulations that have become habitual among both Catholics and Protestants as a result of the disputes of the sixteenth century.

I do not think that an Anglican need feel that he is being in any way disloyal to his own church in adopting such a questioning attitude. He is, I would maintain, bound to adhere to that appeal to primitive wholeness which so notably distinguishes the great Post-Reformation Anglican divines, with their emphasis upon Scripture and the Fathers. But I cannot see that he is bound to hold that either Anglican liturgy or the Anglican divines were at all points successful in making that appeal; the last thing that the Anglican divines would have claimed for themselves is infallibility, whatever may be true of some of the continental reformers. It has, I think, become clear in recent years that the great tragedy of the Reformation lay in the fact that, while the great majority of Reformers were desperately anxious to return, for both their ecclesiastical order and their liturgical forms, to the practices of primitive Christianity, neither they nor anyone else at the time had any adequate knowledge of what primitive Christianity was.<sup>3</sup>

The point of the foregoing quotations from spokesmen of the diverse traditions of the "High Church wing of Christianity" is that they are illustrative both of the great variety of viewpoints comprehended by Dr. Ferré under one label and of rather typical utterances which would seem to belie the particular criticisms set forth by the author.

This is not to say that there are not many weaknesses, obvious weaknesses, in the position of "High Church" advocates. (For example, the all too frequent confusion between the Kingdom of God and the empirical Church.) But the errors and inadequacies are not on the whole those designated by Dr. Ferré.

Well, *where* do we go from here in theology? It is certainly much

<sup>2</sup> Mühlenberg Press, 1952, pp. 333f.

<sup>3</sup> In *Corpus Christi*, London, 1952.

easier to be critical of the forward cutting edge of new ventures than to undertake the risks of similar enterprises. Nevertheless, it does seem that a truly ecumenical theology must in some way take account of those Christian traditions characterized by "objectivity" as well as "subjectivity." They cannot be ignored even though they be quite inadequate as they stand or even heretical. This is to agree with Dr. Ferré as to the principle of "both-and." But it is to suggest that the formula must be far more inclusive and intensive in its application; both more comprehensive and more profound.

It is impossible, for example, to conceive of a "Coming Great Church" which does not in some way embrace the insights and contributions of the traditions of Catholicism, Fundamentalism, Calvinism (both classical and "neo"), Lutheranism, religious existentialism, Christian humanism, and the Pietism which Dr. Ferré so ably and attractively represents. God has not left himself without a witness in even the most improbable places.

It is not likely that our own feeble efforts and dull wit will come up with a definitive theological synthesis. In fact, it is doubtful that the unity of Christendom will be achieved in any sense through doctrinal agreement, no matter how ingenious. A theological view is the product of life, not thought alone; it is properly "existential." The *new* theology will be the *effect* of a new life together in Christian oneness with each other and with Christ, and not its *cause*.



# Theology Beyond Paradox

ARNOLD B. COME

THE THEOLOGY OF PARADOX is up for reappraisal. Indeed, this reappraisal has progressed so far in one direction that it is now proper to speak of neo-liberalism as a reaction to neo-orthodoxy. It began to assert itself already during the war years in *Liberal Theology: An Appraisal*,<sup>1</sup> and received a boost by W. M. Horton in *Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century*.<sup>2</sup> Karl Barth has been quoted as branding Bultmann's "demythologizing" as "a violent comeback of modernism."<sup>3</sup> Bernard Meland heralds a radically reconstructed liberalism as "a new emergent" and hails Daniel D. Williams (who has now moved to Union Seminary to replace Paul Tillich) as a prime contributor.<sup>4</sup> And within the last year Norman Pittenger has frankly called for a salvaging of the values of liberalism.<sup>5</sup> These are but straws in a wind that is beginning to blow full and free through the thinking of the American clergy, who on the whole were never fully persuaded by the dialectical theology.

It would seem, to this writer, that a liberalism which has been truly "chastened" (Horton's phrase) and reconstructed would hardly want to preserve the name. In spite of protestations to the contrary, there is real danger in some quarters that neo-liberalism may be mere *return* to liberalism. We say "danger" because a double tragedy would result for American theology. On the one hand, the old theological battle lines would be redrawn, and the ecumenical movement would be torn asunder from within. On the other hand, American Christianity would be left with an outdated and impotent theological instrument to meet the challenge of a wholly new historical situation. If two world wars and a major depression have given us that realistic apprehension of the human dilemma which produced dialectical theology in Europe, then we are ready for something more

<sup>1</sup> Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> The Macmillan Company, 1951.

<sup>3</sup> *The Christian Century*, Sept. 3, 1952, p. 993.

<sup>4</sup> Meland, B., *Faith and Culture*, Oxford University Press, 1953, p. v.

<sup>5</sup> Pittenger, W. N., "The Rethinking of the Christian Message," *RELIGION IN LIFE*, Winter 1954-1955, pp. 66-71.

---

ARNOLD B. COME, B.D., Th.D., is Professor of Systematic Theology, San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California. The present article is based on the address he delivered at his installation in the Chair of Theology in 1954.

relevant than worn-out liberalism and for something more effective than dialectical paralysis. We are ready for a "theology beyond paradox."

# I

The delineation of such a theology, however, is immediately complicated by the ambiguity of the word "paradox." Its use has become pervasive either as the shibboleth of faith or as the supreme epithet of theological derision. It is assumed that everyone knows what it means, while actually it is being used in several rather diverse senses.

Søren Kierkegaard, the initiator of the contemporary concern about the paradox, maintained that the appearance of God in Jesus Christ was paradoxical, "negatively by revealing the absolute unlikeness of sin, positively by proposing to do away with the absolute unlikeness in absolute likeness."<sup>6</sup> From this original usage in Kierkegaard the meaning of "paradox" has fanned out in two directions: the one in reference to Christian *experience*, the other in reference to Christian *expression*. The Christian *experience* of God is said to be paradoxical in that its substance is "contrary to what we might intend or expect,"<sup>7</sup> "against the opinion of finite reason," and transcending "all possible human expectations . . . and preparations . . . and possibilities."<sup>8</sup> The *expression* of this Christian experience is said to be paradoxical "because God cannot be comprehended in any human words or in any of the categories of our finite thought," and hence analysis and description of the experience can produce only "contradictory, logically incompatible . . . assertions."<sup>9</sup> But each of these modes of paradox are subdivided in current thinking, and the real complexity of the paradox can be seen only in terms of the resulting four types.

## (1) *The Apologetic Paradox.*

Reason may be defined as the structure of the mind, with both ecstatic (emotional) and technical (formal) elements, by which man receives and conceives, grasps and shapes, reality (Tillich). But under the sin-torn conditions of man's present existence, the unity of these elements is broken, and hence the unity of and unity with reality eludes the human mind. The reality of immediate experience, therefore, bewilders man. But when God, Ultimate Reality, breaks through the conditions of human life and

<sup>6</sup> Kierkegaard, S., *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton University Press, 1942, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> Aulén, Gustaf, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, Muhlenberg Press, 1948, p. 294.

<sup>8</sup> Tillich, Paul, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> Baillie, D. M., *God Was In Christ*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948, p. 108.



confronts man, incarnate in man's own sinful existence, the disjointed reason is repulsed and offended. So Tillich says that "there is, in the last analysis, only *one* genuine paradox in the Christian message—the appearance of that which conquers existence under the conditions of existence," the union of the absolute and the concrete, of the universal and the particular.<sup>10</sup>

This is the primal paradox of the "foolishness of the Gospel," the impossible possibility which occurs when sinful man is confronted by the Holy God with the offer of forgiveness. This may be called the "apologetic" paradox because it exists at the border line between the non-Christian and the Christian lives. It does not occur at all within the non-Christian life by itself, nor does it occur again in the Christian life. This paradox exists, in its true and pristine form, only in that perfectly ambiguous "moment" when a person is both repulsed and attracted by God in Christ, when he feels both rejected and accepted, when he both rejects and accepts. This paradox holds meaning in some way for all Christians. And although it is not repeated in a decisive way, its ramifications are evident to the most mature Christian as he is constantly reminded that his fellowship with God grew out of this paradox, and by his continual sense of tension between "this world," of which he is still a part, and the kingdom of God in which he now has his life. The Christian also must deal with this paradox, in an indirect way, whenever he seeks to fulfill his mission of witnessing.

But the question presses: is the apologetic paradox rooted in a still deeper contradiction between God and man? Paradox certainly comes to light inevitably as sinful man is confronted by Holy Loving God. But when this contradiction is transcended in reconciliation, does not man the *creature* experience the even more violent contradiction of his very *being* as he is confronted by his *Creator*?

(2) *The Ontological Paradox.*

Gustaf Aulén maintains that paradox lies at the very core of the Christian religious experience, as a permanent and not just a temporary apologetic element. The tensions between sin as both a condition and an act, between faith as God's work and man's choice, between God as The Eternal, exalted above all change, and yet present in history—these and other tensions "cannot be removed . . . without at the same time removing

<sup>10</sup> Tillich, P., *op. cit.*, p. 57.

the living God of faith."<sup>11</sup> These tensions are held together by the overruling power of God's Love (Agape), but this Love does not explain anything because it meets us as unmotivated and unmerited. "Faith cannot penetrate deeper than to this divine Agape. The more clearly faith perceives its activity, the more it sees itself confronted by the unfathomable and the paradoxical."<sup>12</sup>

In a similar vein, Reinhold Niebuhr asserts certain experienced realities and facts of human nature which "point beyond themselves to a realm of mystery" and "which can be fitted into a framework of meaning only if the meaning has a penumbra of mystery. The mystery consists of a power and a love beyond our comprehension which overrules these various historical dramas."<sup>13</sup> Likewise Tillich posits a "God above God" who transcends even the God of the I-Thou encounter of biblical theism, and who leaves man to the mystical experience of "the courage to be" in which faith takes its ultimate form of "the accepting of the acceptance without somebody or something that accepts."<sup>14</sup>

That there is such a dimension to the growing Christian faith, few would want to deny. The continuing need and experience of forgiveness, the creative love of God, the inexhaustible riches of God's infinity, certainly induce what must be a permanent note of awe in Christian piety. But is the central emphasis of the Christian life on mystery and hence on the ontological paradox? Does the Christian still stand where Job stood at the end of his experience? Niebuhr has pointed to a position beyond both rational liberalism and irrational dialectic, accepting the designation, "biblical realism."<sup>15</sup> He also insists that "pure mystery destroys meaning"<sup>16</sup> and that "the darkness about the meaning of (the self's) existence is due not so much to the finiteness of the self's mind as to the pretensions of its heart."<sup>17</sup> Biblical faith grasps "a key of meaning in the mystery . . . which clarifies, rather than annuls, all the strange and variegated dramas of human history."<sup>18</sup> Tillich likewise believes that the revelation in Jesus Christ brings healing of the disjointed actual reason and "saves" it. In this way reason's "essential structure is re-established under the conditions

<sup>11</sup> Aulén, G., *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>13</sup> Niebuhr, R., *The Self and the Dramas of History*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955, p. 240.

<sup>14</sup> Tillich, P., *The Courage to Be*, Yale University Press, pp. 182-190.

<sup>15</sup> Niebuhr, R., *Christian Realism and Political Problems*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953, p. 197.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

of existence, fragmentarily, yet really and in power;" therefore, "a theology which uses theonomous reason may again be possible."<sup>19</sup>

Such a theology, produced by such a "reason," must be a "theology beyond paradox," beyond both the apologetic paradox of unregenerate reason and the ontological paradox of the over-awed reason as it "leaps" in faith. The mind of man, once restored to its proper function of communion with God, finds its reason capable of some valid knowledge of God, man and the world—no matter how fragmentary and incomplete. At least a key to the meaning of the mystery of life is given, even though its infinite riches are left to be elaborated.

The "saved reason" comes to see that the union of the absolute and the concrete in Jesus Christ is not a contradiction, that is, it does not run counter to what reason should expect or to what it is capable of. Reason comes to see that the concrete is a creation of God as a means of communication, a meeting place, between the infinite and the finite, the Creator and the creature, as a means through which the finite spirit may be one with Infinite Spirit and still remain separate, not losing its identity. The ontological paradox, though not removed in the sense of blurring the distinction between Creator and creature, yet is transcended in a reunion in which there is communion and understanding. Indeed, the relationship of "creation in the image" turns out to be equally a line of permanent discontinuity and a line of vital continuity, neither one effacing the other, but the unity of fellowship proving to be the fulfillment of the purpose of the disunity of Creator and creature.

## II

The question now presses: even though it be granted that Christian *experience* finds standing room beyond both apologetic and ontological paradox, is not Christian theological *expression* of this experience hopelessly enmeshed in both semantic and logical paradoxes?

### (3) *The Semantic Paradox.*

Although the communication of the biblical experience of God often takes both visual and (nonlinguistic) auditory forms, the distinctive and definitive form of impartation has always been the *word*, both spoken and written. Donald Baillie has been quoted above as holding that words cannot comprehend God; therefore, all Christian utterance is involved in paradox.

This thesis has two different meanings. First, it points to the general incommensurability of words in their relation with the things and events

<sup>19</sup> Tillich, P., *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, p. 155.

to which they refer. But in this case, theological terms are not involved in a unique difficulty, because no words are capable of comprehension and communication in and by themselves. All words are but arbitrary signs invented by men, and it is hardly correct to designate the disparity between words and their referents as "paradoxical."

A second kind of difficulty with words exists, however, for Christian theology. To describe the Christian experience words are taken from every other phase and level of human experience—nature, history, science, art, work, play, etc. But the level of the Christian experience of God asserts itself and so is asserted by Christians as being unique. Therefore, the words borrowed to describe it do not have the same meaning in reference to Christian experience as in their original contexts where man's finite and sinful nature conditions all. This disparity in the meanings of words is again indicated by some as "paradoxical." But even here the use of the word "paradox" is hardly tenable.

On the one hand, it must be recognized that there is a continuity as well as a disparity of meaning—for example, when we use the word "kingdom" to refer to the redeeming activity of God. If there were not this continuity which makes the symbolism possible, then Christianity would be forced to make up a wholly new vocabulary of non-sense words to indicate the absolutely unique character of the Christian experience. On the other hand, it must be noted that the difference in meanings creates paradoxical confusion only for the uninitiated, and hence this would be simply another case of apologetic paradox. Christian theology must not be allowed to revel in ambiguity and inconsistency. Within the framework of Christian faith, words and phrases may develop clear meanings and demand consistent usage.<sup>20</sup> And this may be done without lopping off their connotative richness in favor of sterile simplicity. Hence when Christians borrow the word "love" to describe God himself, they certainly do not use it purely in any of its ordinary senses, but likewise they do not use it in an absolutely contradictory or paradoxical sense (as maintained by dialectical theology). Rather, there has occurred a development of meaning, a development impossible for the powers of sinful man but made possible by the revelatory act of God himself in Jesus Christ. And the Christian stands beyond the disparity of meanings, where he can use words with their Christian depth without losing their significant continuity with the common speech and experience of men.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Tillich's "semantic rationality," *Systematic Theology*, pp. 54ff.

One final question still presses: although it be granted that even highly symbolic terms of Christian theology can be developed and used consistently and unambiguously, yet is not *logical* paradox inevitable when these terms are put together into thoughts and sentences according to the structure of finite reason?

(4) *The Logical Paradox.*

Ever since Tertullian said, *Credo quia absurdum* ("I believe because it is absurd"), there have been those who have taken logical absurdity to be the hallmark of Christian truth. It is maintained (cf. Donald Baillie above) that if the transcendent mystery of God actually penetrates human experience, it will of necessity find expression only in logically incompatible assertions because human discourse is constructed according to the limitations of finite consistent experience.

Such a view of theological paradox is based on several confusions. In the first place, even unregenerate reason is highly sensitive to the non-logical depth of reality and has always struggled with the problem of expression and description of its insights in terms of discourse governed by static rules of relationship and consistency. But while the activity of human reason may be distinguished into depth of insight and logical structure, the activity always involves both, preventing their being set apart as mutually exclusive paradoxical elements. In the second place, therefore, even human reason which has been shocked and awed by the unexpected revelations of the Divine finds the logical rules of definition and relationship of words and ideas helpful in the task of expression and communication. Not that the content or scope of ideas are determined in the least by the structures of logic, but the regenerate reason of the Christian discovers pre-eminently that God is faithful and not capricious.

It is from this point of view that Aulén maintains that the paradoxes of the Christian faith are *religious*, not logical or metaphysical. God's reception of the sinner "is a paradoxical act, but it is not at all a logically contradictory proposition."<sup>21</sup> Likewise, to say that the Christian is simultaneously saint and sinner involves no logical contradiction if the two terms are understood in their Christian sense instead of in a humanistic sense.<sup>22</sup> In a similar vein Tillich asserts that "paradox points to the fact that in God's acting finite reason is superseded but not annihilated; it expresses this fact in terms which are not logically contradictory but which are supposed to point beyond the realm in which finite reason is applicable."

<sup>21</sup> Aulén, G., *op. cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

Christians are not asked "to sacrifice reason in order to accept senseless combinations of words as divine wisdom," not to swallow, as contradictions, the *apparent* contradictions of Christian statements.<sup>23</sup> Rather, Christians are called upon to understand these meaningful and logically consistent statements by sharing in the experiences of which the statements are a description.

In summary, then, some grounds have been discovered for the various uses of the term "paradox" in reference to Christian theology. And any realistic theology must be deeply sensitive to all these grounds and to the problems they create for theology. The most legitimate reference of the word to theology appears to be in terms of the apologetic paradox. But in every instance, it has been maintained, the Christian life is lived "beyond paradox." Manifestly, a "theology beyond paradox" is called for.

### III

A "theology beyond paradox" must arise if the church is to be the Body of Christ. Not that we object to the paradox of dialectical theology because it offends our human dignity or the demands of our finite reason. Any degree of a Christian consciousness of sin plunges human reason into abject humility. Rather, we object to the persistent paradox because it stops short of giving adequate place to the real, actual presence and activity of God as Holy Spirit among us and within us, and through us into all the world around us. *Theology beyond paradox will be theology of the Holy Spirit.* Not a theology *about* the Holy Spirit, although that is a crying need, but rather a theology as an understanding of our Christian faith-relationship with God in terms of our actual personal union with him and in terms of his actual presence with us and activity through us. So theology beyond paradox will be Trinitarian theology, but more specifically, theology of the Holy Spirit, because Holy Spirit is precisely God in his unity as Person in personal communion with men.

The transcendence of God, and the paradox of his Word, are neither avoided nor completely surmounted, but *something more is added*; a new dimension in our relation with God develops which gives an entirely new perspective to the whole. Into the chasm that separates sinful man from the Wholly-Other God, there comes a Divine Disturbance, the Word of God seeking men out wherever they are and bringing them to judgment in love. And for those who follow him, out of this Divine Disturbance there gradually emerges the firmness and strength and warmth of a life to-

<sup>23</sup> Tillich, P., *op. cit.*, p. 57.



gether. And this life together brings an understanding which dissipates the dialectic tensions of the Word, an understanding in which the Transcendent One imparts to our hearts the mysteries of his purpose, so that we are no longer servants but friends. This is the experience and the knowledge of God the Holy Spirit.

Not that Christianity develops into a religion of being buddy-buddies or co-workers with God. For, as Kierkegaard has said, "It is less terrible to fall to the ground when the mountains tremble at the voice of God, than to sit at table with him as an equal; and yet it is God's concern precisely to have it so."<sup>24</sup> And only then does the true fulfillment of our calling in Christ come: we bear fruit; we act out of love and not mere obedience, love that is knowledge. We are not left trembling in the darkness, on the edge of some bottomless abyss of nonbeing, left to screw up our courage by "the accepting of the acceptance without somebody or something that accepts."

Two examples of theology beyond paradox, of theology of the Holy Spirit, may be given in order to demonstrate our urgent need in this direction. One of the greatest perplexities facing the World Council of Churches is the very nature of the church itself. What *is* the church? It is on this point that Brunner is at his paradoxical best—or worst. Within the brief compass of his little book, *The Misunderstanding of the Church*, Brunner draws these two statements together; on the one hand, he says that the church as "the Body of Christ is a pure communion of persons entirely without institutional character. . . . As the body of Christ the church has nothing to do with an organization and has nothing of the character of the institutional about it."<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, he says, "to this ecclesia the existing churchly institutions are related as *means* . . . an instrument for the growth and renewal of the [ecclesia]."<sup>26</sup> Now, *either* the Spiritual Fellowship has *nothing* to do with churchly institutions, *or* churchly institutions are related as means of growth and renewal. It cannot be both ways. This can be nothing but a deliberate logical paradox. But while it may be stimulating and provocative, it proves to be more confusing than helpful. If this be intra-church apologetics, so be it. But such a contradiction need not, must not be allowed to stand within the theological confession of our faith.

With simple humble realism we accept and use the church's mechan-

<sup>24</sup> Kierkegaard, S., *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>25</sup> Brunner, E., *The Misunderstanding of the Church*, The Westminster Press, 1953, pp. 11, 17.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

isms, finite and changing though they be, as the God-chosen media of communion with him and with each other in the Spirit of Christ. Where is the paradox in this? That Holy God should fellowship in love with sinful man? This surely comes as a shock to the pagan. But the mystery of God's purpose, hidden from the foundations of the world, unknown by the kings and wise men of the ages, now is given to the little ones in faith in Christ. As Brunner has explained so well so many times, in Christ man comes to know his true self and to realize that he was created by God out of love and for love, and now is redeemed and reconciled by love.

Secondly, let us look at the vexing question of eschatology. Here paradox reigns supreme! Who dares any more to look at the concrete world around us and claim to see the kingdom of God, "Lo, there!" or "Lo, here!", when we know that at any moment our most cherished human culture and most impressive physical conquests can be reduced by an H-bomb to dreams and dust in the twinkling of an eye? Yet, on the other hand, who of Christ's band dares to lean back and sigh, "Ah well, we will wait for God to bring his kingdom, and may the end come quickly!" What, then, is left but the tension-filled unity of the paradox? Even John Bright in his otherwise sane and biblical account of the Kingdom of God lapses into the paradox on this issue. "That is indeed paradox!" he exclaims. "What is this kingdom that has come but has not come, that is already victorious but is anything but victorious? . . . In the tension between the two the church must live, and must always live, as the 'eschatological community.'"<sup>27</sup>

We protest! Although all that has been said is true, it is not the whole truth. It is not the truth by which the church lives and dies. The error here is twofold. On the one hand, John Bright plays on the apologetic paradox, repeatedly noting that the church is not victorious "from a human point of view," or "as far as human eyes could see," or "as the world understands." *Within the context of Christian faith*, who cares what the world can see or understand! Theology delineates what *we* do see and understand.

On the other hand, John Bright creates a logical paradox based on a semantic paradox. "The Kingdom of God," he says, "must be understood in a twofold aspect: it has come and is even now in the world; it is also yet to come."<sup>28</sup> The natural reaction obviously is to exclaim, "Oh, isn't this marvelous! How can something be at two points in time and space at the

<sup>27</sup> Bright, J., *The Kingdom of God*, The Abingdon Press, 1953, pp. 234, 237.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

same time? A paradox!" But as John Bright well knows, the Kingdom is not a *thing*. The kingdom of God is God himself in action, God's power, God's reign, in history for the accomplishment of his purpose of salvation. Decisively, this reign of God strikes into history in the life of Jesus Christ, continues horizontally in his Body, the church, and comes to perfect consummation when Christ returns at the end of time.

In the mind of those in Christ no contradiction arises in the concept of the Kingdom when God's saving act is known to be a *process* and not a *thing*, especially when it is understood in a threefold instead of a twofold aspect. On the one hand, we are mightily concerned with the origin of the kingdom in the once-and-for-all work of Jesus of Nazareth, and ever and again we must return in *faith* to meet the Master as he strides out of the hills of Galilee to meet us, or we cannot know the power of his forgiveness. On the other hand, we are mightily concerned with the future consummation of the Kingdom when he comes again, for we along with the whole creation groan for the redemption of our bodies, and we are saved by the *hope* of meeting God our Savior. But our dominant concern with the kingdom is neither with its origin nor with its consummation, because these lie within the initiative of God. Nor is our present life in the Kingdom racked and torn by the tension between our faith and our hope. Midway between these two poles the tension is dissolved because, in the words of Paul, whereas "we are justified by *faith* . . . and rejoice in our *hope* of sharing the glory of God, even more we rejoice in our sufferings . . . because God's *love* has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5).

The life of the Christian and of the Christian community is life in the love of God in the Holy Spirit, lived positively, creatively, confidently, humbly—beyond paradox. And to this life we give our all because we know that the coming of Christ will have been for nought and the consummation will not come, unless the Spirit of God performs his will in us today.

In this bond of a common life of service to a common Lord whose love envelops all, the discordant claims of rival factions will hush in embarrassed silence and be forgotten as we bear one another's burdens in the way of the cross wherein we seek to lift the burden of sin from the bowed and broken shoulders of the world of man. What hope for *oikoumene*, for the Holy Catholic Church and Communion of Saints, except in the love of God beyond the clash of antinomy and paradox? If the hardened shell of pagan unbelief without the church, and cold complacency within, demand

afresh the rude shock of the dashing, smashing truth of God, then let the gauntlet of the Gospel be cast down! Let the glaring, revealing light of God's Holy Love pierce and shatter the deceptive seclusion of man's darkened heart and mind and world.

But let it be clearly understood: such a ministry of reconciliation to a hostile world can issue forth only from that Body of Christ which itself already has been baptized into his death to the frightening contradictions of man's world of delusion—and which has risen with him to know love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in the new life in the Spirit of God.

# Changing Conceptions and Unchanging Truth

WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE

THIS IS THE LAST TIME that I shall stand in this pulpit for our Thursday Faculty service. Therefore I think tonight of those who have stood here in the long years past, and of those who will be preaching here in the years to come. The immediate words and emphases will differ, but underneath these always is the unchanging reality of God. What we say in any generation is like the movement of waves that roll according to the direction in which the wind is blowing, but whatever power they possess depends upon the profundity of the underlying sea. So the movements of thought and faith in any generation come out of forces deeper than ourselves. As John Robinson said in his farewell sermon to the Pilgrims as they set forth on their adventure into a new world, "There is always more truth ready to break forth out of God's holy Word."

Tonight, therefore, let us try to see our present moment in the living relationship to what has been and what is to be.

Jesus said, "Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (Matt. 13:52, RSV). What, then, are some of the treasures of truth which we inherit? And how shall we estimate their value?

## I

In the early years of this century, the Christian who would have been accounted to be the scribe trained for the Kingdom of heaven was the so-called *liberal*. What he brought forth seemed to be the ultimate treasures given by God. In the thought-world of our present day, and in the conversation patterns of this seminary, he is not now a subject for fulsome praise. On the contrary, it might seem as though there were none so poor to do him reverence.

---

WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE, M.A., S.T.D., formerly Rector of St. Paul's Church, Richmond, Virginia, and Grace Church in New York City, was Professor of Homiletics at the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia from 1950 until June, 1955; still resident in Alexandria, Virginia. He preached this sermon in the chapel there shortly before his retirement.

But for the first stage of our thought tonight, let us consider him and his shortcomings—and his virtues, if any.

Some of his shortcomings were obvious. He had not lived long enough to learn the words that the initiated speak: paradoxical, dialectical, existential, eschatological. He did not know that life might be meaningless, or at any rate, that a person must appear very unsophisticated if he did not consider that life is supposed to look that way. He had an innocent liking for those great words of St. Paul: "*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.*" He had not been persuaded that to be thoroughly Pauline and orthodox he must change his emphasis to the demonic, the devil, and doom.

If those were the lesser shortcomings, there could be a graver one. That is to say, there was a type of so-called liberal who had such an easy confidence in the virtues and abilities of himself and of others like him that he could develop a patronizing unconcern for the greatness of God. That kind of left-wing liberal, carelessly supposed by the unthinking to be typical of the liberal spirit generally, actually belonged in another classification and under another name. He was not a liberal in the deep, true meaning of that word—a meaning which we shall presently consider. He was a non-Christian humanist, and not more than that. It is that type of humanist who has been made to look shallow and empty by the catastrophic facts of the last forty years. "Glory to man in the highest! for man is the master of things," sang the poet Swinburne in the bland confidence of the Victorian Age. Man as the master of things! Out of the jungle of those fearful depths which lie beneath the smooth surface of our civilization emerged the dark forces which would show whether man was master or not: the blind impulses, the passions, the ferocities which have mocked our human self-righteousness and pride. Man is not master of himself, much less of his world. As T. S. Eliot wrote in *Murder in the Cathedral*:

Sweet and cloying through the dark air  
Falls the stifling scent of despair.<sup>1</sup>

That is the bitter and humiliating lesson the humanist had to learn.

Such is the fact, but a critical mistake may follow it. The unthinking, misled by loose use of words, may assume that all who belong to the liberal spirit are identical with the humanists, so everything that is called liberal may be despised. Whenever that is true, something precious may be lost

<sup>1</sup> Eliot, T. S., *Murder in the Cathedral*. Used by permission of Faber and Faber, Ltd., London, and Harcourt Brace and Company, New York. Harcourt Brace ed., 1935, p. 43.



from the treasures that ought to be brought into the Kingdom of God.

In its richest use the word *liberal* is not a noun but an adjective. It represents not the whole but a part of what the Christian may dare to be. I have known many men in the great lineage of this seminary—and I would want to be among them—who called themselves *liberal evangelicals*. There, you see, it is *evangelical* that is the basic fact. To be an evangelical is to be devoted first of all and deepest of all to the *evangelium*, the gospel, which means the good news. That good news is the everlasting story of the love of God revealed in Jesus crucified and risen—the Jesus who is the Savior not as a dim figure from a dead past, but as the living and adored Master whom the disciples knew, by whose cross and passion they and we have been redeemed, and who can be the great companion on our roads of life today.

That is what it means to be an evangelical. And what when the adjective *liberal* is added? It means a conception of the gospel so glad and confident that faith is set free from little fears and inhibitions. It means a wider area of thought and action to which the Christian can reach out unafraid. The liberal evangelical did not have to be apprehensive lest his gospel should be lost if he followed honestly on the ways of biblical scholarship. Neither did he have to think that his gospel, or his church loyalty, would be lost if he had an open and generous mind toward the truths that might come to him through other churches.

Part of our inheritance which we might take for granted ought to wake in us instead a lively gratitude toward those who won it for us. We might assume as a matter of course today the fact that we are free to study and interpret the Bible in the light of everything we know about it. But that freedom was bought with a price. It was bought by the brave men who dared loneliness, unpopularity, and ecclesiastical denunciation in order to push the frontier of accepted truth beyond the narrow bounds where timid conservatives would have held it. We might assume also that it is natural for us to want more Christian cooperation and—by God's grace—Christian reunion. But the fact that we do want it did not develop accidentally. It has come nearer because men of liberal sympathies tried with all their hearts to bring it near. If we move in a larger and more generous world of Christian thought today it is because men like great old Dr. Sparrow have dared to say, "Seek the truth; come whence it may, cost what it will." That is the liberal spirit at its highest. Anyone among us who should ever speak the word "liberal" with glib disparagement could

do so only because of carelessness, or ignorance, or a flippant effort to sound smart. And those who understand the richness of our inheritance know that the liberal mind is one of the treasures that must never be lost from the Kingdom of God.

## II

Treasures new and old—said the words of the Gospel. In religious experience the new may become the old; and what had been old returns as the new again. So it may seem with an aspect of the truth which is in the forefront now—*neo-orthodoxy*.

It is like the old come back because it is a reversal from the humanism which had lost the awful dimensions of life and destiny that belonged to men who knew the Bible. The neo-orthodox return to the Bible has brought us face to face once more with the Lord "high and lifted up"—the majesty of God, the power of his eternal purpose before which our imagined self-sufficiency and our human pride are brought down to the dust. With a new sincerity we confess that we have erred and strayed from his ways, and that in the light of his holiness there is no health in us. The almost jaunty optimism about our world that prevailed a generation ago stands now under the shadow of the recollected consciousness that everything which rests upon ourselves alone will perish. Our accumulated sins may destroy our civilization. And whether that happens or not, as individuals we move every day nearer to the dark gate of death. Whenever the bell tolls, it is not some unrelated summons: it tolls for you and me.

In the deeper aspects of ourselves we can give thanks, therefore, for this recovered note in the proclamation of eternal truth. It teaches us again the *solemnity* of existence. It is not so easy now to drift like the careless crowd that is satisfied with the neon lights and the cheap glitter of a carnival. We stand as souls that have lost their way in an awful emptiness and lift our eyes to find again the guidance of the eternal stars.

The *solemnity* of our existence—and the *tragic* element in it: many of you have learned that too. You know that we are caught by evil forces within us, and by evil forces in our world. There is no plain way out. As with St. Paul, again and again it happens that the good we want to do we cannot do; and the evil we would not do, we do. The shadow of a great frustration falls upon us. We cannot escape from the demands that conscience lays upon us. Yet we cannot meet them. What is left, then, but defeat and near-despair?

The answer is that exactly then, when nothing seems left, all that is great and redeeming begins. The new-old truth comes to us again out of the treasures of the gospel. We may call it salvation through grace.

We may call it justification by faith. But what matters most is not the name but the reality. There are those of you who have known that reality. When you were most down—and because you confessed that you were down—a power from above you has lifted you up. When you were ashamed of your failures and your unworthiness, it was as though the voice of God had spoken in your heart: "My child, you do not have to be perfect for me to love you and to draw you to myself." Then with a rush of gratitude you have felt the burden of your attempted self-sufficiency drop from you. Like a spent swimmer, with inexpressible relief you have let go the tension of the struggle that was drowning you, because you knew now that you could let the rescuing hands of God take hold.

### III

Such, then, are some of the treasures that may be brought by the scribes trained for the Kingdom of God. The treasures—which are the changing emphases of truth—may be different according as the scribes may be those who are called liberal, or are called neo-orthodox. But the gifts, or the seeming gifts, they bring will be pure treasure in so far, and only in so far, as they belong to the perfect gift. And that perfect gift is this: *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.*

It is toward him, then, that our thought supremely ascends. It is the name above every name that we remember. And that name is Jesus.

It is possible for us to talk so abstractly about Christianity that we lose any vivid awareness of him who is our Christ. But Christianity is no abstraction. It is not another mystery religion of a remote and unknowable dying and rising God. It is the story of one incomparable actual Person who in the way he lived and the way he chose to die has shown us the heart of the eternal Father.

In *A Student in Arms*,<sup>2</sup> a book written during the first World War, there is a chapter on an officer in the British Army who became "The Beloved Captain." It tells of this commander of his men, "tall, erect, smiling. So we first saw him, and so he remained to the end." His devotion to his men, his courage, his self-forgetfulness, won their devotion. Their whole morale was lifted when he was near. "We loved him," they said. "And there isn't anything stronger than love, when all's said and done." When he was killed as he went to the rescue of some of his men wounded in the front-line trenches, for the spirit of his company he was still alive. "We feel his eyes on us. We still work for that wonderful smile of his." And although any comparison from our life falls short of

<sup>2</sup> Hankey, D., *A Student in Arms*, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1917.

the infinite reality of Christ, that illustration at least suggests the transfiguring influence of his spiritual presence. Out of the Gospels can come to us again that living figure round whom the first disciples rallied, and contact with him can bring to us the kind of Christianity which is not a speculation but a rejoicing power. Salvation by Christ is no anonymous and formless matter. It is no miscellaneous New Being. It is a quality of life that to some degree at least can inspire those of us who have seen both the strength and the tenderness, the challenge and the encouragement of Jesus. He can be to us the incomparable "Beloved Captain."

If thus we do try to come close in our spiritual apprehension to Jesus as the Lord of life, the first gift that comes from him is *confidence*.

Have you any doubt that we need confidence? We need it most of all because of what some of the theologians have done to us. They have made it appear that a proper religion ought to be a kind of sanctified depression. The word *meaninglessness* echoes in our conversation and in too many of our sermons like the hollow notes of a cracked bell. Our minds are beginning to appear as Hamlet said his body was, "in customary suits of solemn black, and the dejected 'havior of the visage." "This is an age of anxiety," we are told again and again; and in the insidious power of suggestion, we make ourselves into the pattern of the words we use. As David Riesman has written in *The Lonely Crowd*: "Contrary to the situation prevailing in the nineteenth century, pessimism has become an opiate and the small chance that the dangers so obviously menacing the world can be avoided is rendered even smaller by our use of these menaces in order to rationalize our resignation."<sup>3</sup>

What must we say of such a mood, except that it is pitifully out of keeping with the spirit of Jesus, which moves through the Gospels like a shining light? He has been called the man of sorrows, and that is true, for his great compassion went all the way into the utmost depths of our human sin and grief. But shall we forget that in the very night before his crucifixion he told his disciples that all he had taught them ought to lead to this: "That my *joy* might remain in you, and that your *joy* might be full." And what is the source of that joy, that can run like the strong current of a river, whether at the moment its surface is in sunlight or in shadow? It is *confidence* in God. And more than that. It is *confidence* in God's creation, and an expectant trust that everywhere in his created world his greatness and his goodness will draw near.

There were ugly facts in Jesus' world. Did he dwell on those? He

<sup>3</sup> Riesman, D., *The Lonely Crowd*, Yale University Press, 1950, p. 35.

did not. His eyes took in the beauty of the Galilean lilies, the play of children in the marketplace, the look on the faces of the mothers who lifted up their babies for him to bless. Did he say, as he might have said, "This is an age of anxiety"? He did not. He said, "Be not anxious, for your Father knoweth—." Did he ever bear himself as though he might be asking whether life is meaningless? How incredible in relation to him such a question seems! There were the deep moments when he could not see the Father's final pattern, but he never doubted that there *was* a pattern which his Father would fulfill. Therefore every moment of the day had meaning, every familiar sight and sound its great suggestion—the sun and the rain, the miracle of the sown seed, the flight of birds to their nests, the sheep with their lambs coming home to the fold; the pleading eyes of the repentant sinner, the light on that sinner's face as he turned to the forgiveness of Christ.

Would you like to move out from the shadow of an anxiety which sometimes seems almost deliberate—out from that into the light of the *confidence* that belonged to Jesus? Then learn to be more sensitive to all the wide ways in which God's glory can be revealed to you. Do not let anybody make you think that it is only in the miserable dark alleys of your introspection and your wrestling with your sins that God comes to you. Find him also as St. Francis did in the beauty and wonder of his world: in leaves budding with the spring, in the song of the mocking bird, in the look of eyes where love is shining, in the voice of the little child that calls to you, in all deep gratitude for the fullness of life which makes you know that "There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea." When thus you get out from your poor little worried involvements and open your minds and hearts to the realities which praise God and magnify him forever, then you touch the deep springs of the joy that must have belonged to Jesus. Then because God has actually come near to you in so many common ways, you can have *confidence* that he is with you in the times when you cannot see.

As we gain from God in Jesus the gift of confidence, so there comes to us also a greater *courage*.

One of the dangers in some contemporary theology is that instead of increasing courage it may destroy it. Too much emphasis on our own sinful weakness and on the evil of the world in general may paralyze the nerve of effort. Some of you are beginning to recognize that already. "I wonder," wrote one of you a few weeks ago, "if the younger men in the ministry are not allowing themselves to be sucked into the maelstrom

of misery which seems to be widening its arc so much these days." Then you went on: "There is part of me that desires a more heroic ideal of the ministry than that of the minister struggling hopelessly in a fallen world."

May God kindle that same desire, and give you *courage* for it as you go out from the Seminary in these days which because of their very difficulty are a great time to be alive! In every community there will be evils for true men to see and brave men to fight against: needs of the neglected poor; of Negroes or other minorities pushed about and exploited; of lonely men denied their right of independent thought and speech and silenced by fanaticism; of children allowed to grow up in rotten slums; of men and boys corrupted in some foul jail which decent citizens have never looked at—and all the ugly evils which vicious politics and community indifference have kept hidden. You will meet some who have grown disillusioned about a crusading Christianity. They may talk about God's Kingdom at the end of history, but they are not trying to shape the history of their own town more closely to God's purpose now.

And you? Like the priest and Levite on the Jericho road, will you pass by the crying human needs on the plea that they are not your or your church's responsibility? Or will you bring a more gallant resolution? Never mind if the fight is hard. Pray for the *courage* that your Lord had in the face of Herod and the high priests and the traders in the temple. And if it seems sometimes that you have gained nothing but disappointment and near-defeat, nevertheless let this be your battle cry:

Oh, yesterday our little troop was ridden through and through,  
Our swaying, tattered pennons fled, a broken, beaten few,  
And all a summer afternoon they hunted us and slew;  
But Tomorrow,  
By the living God, we'll try the game again! <sup>4</sup>

And so, our thought tonight comes to its end. Many gifts may be brought to us out of the treasures of the Kingdom of God. Among these may be the better *confidence* and *courage* that can belong to those who are saved from themselves by the crucified Lord. But he who died as a sacrifice for all our human sins has given us something beyond his death. He has given us the *companionship* of his risen life. When you try to be loyal to him you will not be alone. He will go with you as light and life and power. He will be no memory only from an ancient time. He will be "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

<sup>4</sup> Masefield, John, "To-Morrow" in *Salt Water Ballads*. Copyright 1913, 1944, by The Macmillan Company. Permission has been granted by The Macmillan Company, by the Society of Authors, London, and Dr. John Masefield, O.M.



# The Relevance of Ministerial Training

RONALD A. WARD

## I

THE VIEW IS HELD in some quarters, according to an English religious paper, that if the theological colleges were closed revival would break out. I was wondering if the word "revival" would be understood in academic circles, or at any rate if it were appropriate (it seemed as unlikely as reading "are you saved?" in the *Journal of Theological Studies*), until I remembered that a few years ago the University of Oxford awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for a thesis on this very subject (J. E. Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain*). Such, alas, is the misconception of our work. Again, the colleges frequently send students to minister at weekends to the churches; and it is said that in Wales when one of the churches was particularly insistent on having Mr. So-and-So as the student, a certain college had to take a strong line and threaten to send a professor to preach. That story is probably apocryphal, but such is the impression that some of us make. There is enough of truth in the story to call us to reassess our work.

We have all, no doubt, been plagued through the years by students who complain that they want to preach the gospel, and why have they to study all these irrelevant subjects? More alarming is the attitude of ministers of mature age, to be found on both sides of the Atlantic, who tell us that most of what they were forced to learn in college is irrelevant to their ministry, and who prove it by a complete neglect now of theological reading. "They can't read Greek and won't read English." It may well be

---

RONALD A. WARD, Ph.D., is Professor of New Testament at Wycliffe College, The University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada. This paper was prepared for a conference held at Toronto, of representatives of Theological Faculties in Eastern Canada, in connection with the current survey of theological education on this continent.

Readers in the United States may be glad of the following notes with regard to Canadian expressions. "College" in some places may mean "Theological College," that is, the United States Seminary or Divinity School. An "Arts student" corresponds to the United States college undergraduate; he takes the "Arts course" (B.A. course) which leads to the "Arts degree"—the "Bachelor of Arts" (B.A.). "Matriculation" is the entrance examination which qualifies a student to begin the B.A. course. "Pastoralia" means "Pastoral Theology," the study of the "practical" side of the ministry.

the case that we are wiser than they are, but we ought to be able to prove it with a complete answer to their charges; it is important, not only that justice should be done, but that justice should be seen to be done.

At the outset we should make some preliminary assumptions or postulates, about which there should be no need of argument. There IS a gospel, greater than our studies, more sublime than all our theologies, more binding on us than our academic obligations or our intellectual conscience. We are, in short, men with a gospel, with *the* gospel, which with us is primary and fundamental. Without that we have no business to be engaged in training men for the ministry. We must not reproduce the situation described by Maisie Ward in *Return to Chesterton*: "Lucian Oldershaw once remarked that the masters who had taught them their religion had been themselves agnostics and Gilbert, remembering their faces as they wearily expounded the Greek Testament, suddenly realised that this was true."<sup>1</sup> Secondly, our students are likewise men with a gospel, a gospel which they believe, by which they live, and which they intend to preach. We may differ from our students in our greater knowledge in the service of the faith, and in a longer experience of its power; but ultimately they and we live by and in the same Lord. Any student who fails here should not be in a theological college but in the catechumenate.

Now, remembering these postulates, we may observe that a theological college partakes of the nature of a university, of a church, and of a school of vocational training. It is like a university in that it is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge: its interests are intellectual, its discipline academic, its work teaching and, to some extent, research. It resembles a church, for its members belong to the People of God, they love him, they serve him, and it is by his will that they are in college at all. It is like a school of vocational training, for we know what the students are going to be—ministers. The university may not always know. The Arts student, for instance, studying French, may be going to enter any profession within certain broad limits: he may become a teacher in a school or university, he may enter the Diplomatic Service, he may go to France as a salesman for a Canadian company or as a journalist. One cannot imagine a Professor of French saying, "Now when you are selling your automobiles . . ." French is surely studied for its own sake. But with us, a professor might well find himself saying, "Now in the parish . . ." Even Textual Criticism may come into its own when used in dealing with a difficult obscurantist.

<sup>1</sup> Sheed & Ward, 1952, p. 25.

This balance between university, church, and vocational school must be maintained. If we emphasize exclusively the university side, we may produce a race of theorists, stuffed with knowledge, but unable to minister to the saints. We all have heard of ministerial misfits. At the worst we may produce a mere learned impiety which forgets that knowledge may only blow up a toy balloon, whereas love builds (1 Cor. 8:1). We may produce a race of ministers who despise their humbler brother who has entered by what we kindly call "the back door." It is useless to speak of the brotherhood of man if we do not manifest the brotherhood of the church, the brotherhood of the ministry. If we dwell too much on the aspect of the church, we forget that the college is not merely a place for devotional growth—though it is that. We countenance the situation which shocked Bishop Phillips Brooks so much when he entered the Divinity School:<sup>2</sup> students who prayed like steam engines in the prayer meeting, but the next day showed that not only had they not learnt their Greek, but never learnt it. "The boiler had no connection with the engine." This can only yield an unlearned piety. And if we think only of the future ministry, our men will leave college confirmed in an unlearned, impious procrastination and laziness.

With the assumptions, then, about the gospel, and the ideal before us of our task in that one institution which is university, church, and vocational school, we ask what is the purpose of ministerial training. It is not merely academic enrichment, or, to use Aristotle's language in the *Politics*,<sup>3</sup> an education which is noble and liberal, worthy, we may say, of one of Christ's freemen; though it certainly is that. Nor is its object theological research, leading to the degree of M.Th., except for a minority. Nor is it to give a man the means to endure the loneliness of a country parish, on the lines of the tag from Democritus, ἡ παιδεία εὐτυχῶσι κόσμος, ἀτυχῶσι καταφύγιον, though it may well do that.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately it is much more practical, less broad in its sweep, more concentrated. During the war, Mr. Churchill rounded off one of his moving passages with the simple words, "Give us the tools and we will finish the job." Such, I imagine, is the cry of the man who has the love of God in his heart, the call of God in his ears, and the needs of men before his eyes. Our task is to supply the tools for the

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures on Preaching*, 1877, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> 1338a, 32.

<sup>4</sup> B 180 Diels ii, p. 10. Dr. Kathleen Freeman, in her book *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (a companion to Diels' *Fragmente*), p. 318, translates, "Education is a discipline in prosperity, a refuge in adversity." I am purposely using κόσμος in the sense of "the world." It is undoubtedly true that the man who is in the life of culture in the big cities has the "world," and if he is an educated man, in a lonely place, he has a "refuge" in his "inner world" of culture.

ministerial job, particularly for that act which sums up the ministerial activity—preaching. A man does not need a long academic preparation for the celebration of the two sacraments, particularly if they be interpreted *ex opere operato*.

## II

This raises the whole question of the theological course, the curriculum. With some subjects the relevance is obvious, and we need not spend any time discussing whether we should retain Liturgics, Pastoralia, Homiletics, Christian Education. Presumably the most bitter critic among our alumni would need no persuasion here. I ask only that in Homiletics it be not as I have sometimes seen it in England—the blind leading the blind; and that here, as indeed in all subjects, our academic enthusiasm may not insist on giving precision instruments exclusively, when sometimes there is room for a good honest hammer. As a friend of mine is fond of putting it, “you people in colleges will prepare a champagne ministry for a beer constituency.”

On the face of it there should be no need to speak at all of the study of the Old and New Testaments. These, if any, are surely relevant subjects. But here the test of relevance must be applied to the methods of our teaching. Let it be said at once that there is no need for us to be unsympathetic to what is sometimes called “the critical approach to the Bible.” As W. A. L. Elmslie says,<sup>5</sup> “The story of Israel is summed up in the New Testament phrase ‘out of darkness into His marvellous light.’ To us is given opportunity to watch the passing of that darkness, the coming of the dawn—aware that even the earliest rays of light streamed from Him Who is forever the Way, the Truth and the Life.” Could the critical approach to the Old Testament be better described?

Even so, we ought always to keep in mind the fact that we are training preachers, not candidates for scholarships as such, and we should show them how the Old Testament is to be preached; we should manifest something of the spirit of Sir George Adam Smith’s *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*; of A. B. Davidson, who said that “we should feel that we fail to do justice to the Old Testament, if, when expounding any truth found in it, we do not bring into connection with the passage explained the highest form of the truth as revealed in the *New Testament*,”<sup>6</sup> of Theodore Robinson (no fundamentalist), whose Old Testament lectures in the University transformed the preaching of a dull

<sup>5</sup> *How Came Our Faith?* Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1949, p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Woods, J., *The Old Testament in the Church*, The Macmillan Company, 1950, p. 6.

curate in South Wales so that his congregation sought long for an explanation of the change. By all means give the students C. R. North on the Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah: and then go on to say something of the fulfillment in Christ. In the parish the minister will be using this part of Holy Scripture in his preaching: show him how to do so. Otherwise he will either ignore the Old Testament completely, or else use it as a Jew, or indulge in vagaries of interpretation on the lines of some of the early Apologists.

I like the reading in Codex Bezae at Acts 18:4, "inserting the name of the Lord Jesus" in the Old Testament Scriptures<sup>7</sup> where appropriate. Surely we all do this when we sing the Psalms or quote, say, Psalm 23 in our pastoral work. "The Lord is my Shepherd"—who is the Lord, for us? The God of Israel? Yes, and more. We are not anachronistic Jews; we virtually "insert the name of the Lord Jesus." Let us show the coming minister how to do it properly. He will certainly do it. Let him learn how to do it rightly.

In the New Testament field the same argument applies, *mutatis mutandis*. We have to show our men the main problems of this or that book. But let us save our young ministers from being told by one of the young people of the church, as I was, that "everything in Christianity is a problem." Let us prevent the attitude of the young student, a future canon of the church, who asked his fellow at the end of a New Testament lecture, "What's the score now? that must be about twenty chapters we can't use in the parish." There is a New Testament scholar whom I could name, whose work is known both in his home across the Atlantic and here as well, who was the cause of great dissatisfaction to the head of his college. "He sits there and gives them what the Germans are saying instead of teaching them the Greek Testament." Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and know all mysteries and unfold all demythologies, and fail to teach the content of the New Testament to preachers, I am nothing. As they leave college for the ministry, let them carry with them an abiding impression which transcends all their critical studies: a faith, not a problem; a vision of a clear path, not a maze.<sup>8</sup>

In Systematic Theology it seems that our task is twofold. It is first the establishment of the mutual relations between the various truths of

<sup>7</sup> See Lake and Cadbury, *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. IV, The Macmillan Company, 1933, p. 223.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Smedes, Lewis B., *The Incarnation: Trends in Modern Anglican Thought*, J. H. Kok—N. V. Kampen, 1953, pp. 21-22. "A great deal of what W. R. Matthews writes is already suggested by the title of his piece ('The Problem of Christ in the Twentieth Century'): Christ is not a mystery but a 'problem,' a basically human problem whose solution leaves a basically human Christ."

God, so that Christian truth may be seen steadily and seen whole; so that one doctrine does not invalidate another, or invalidate itself by getting out of proportion. And, secondly, it is the attempt to reduce God's truth to manageable limits so that it may be communicated. "Doctrine," said Bishop Phillips Brooks in a terse phrase, "is truth considered with reference to its being taught."<sup>9</sup> One would think that this would carry its own relevance to men who seek to preach Christ, but if it does not, I suggest this test. Any theology worth the name can be preached; not indeed in great slabs of strong meat carved raw from the works of Barth or Brunner, but dressed and seasoned in quantities suited to the capacity of the congregation. But the student must deal with it in the raw, unseasoned; like John Wesley's sermons, so to speak, which have had the illustrations removed. Therefore, in teaching the student systematics, let us stretch his brain *and* warm his heart. *Pectus facit theologum.*

Church History is a subject which can easily degenerate into a dreary irrelevance, sometimes brightened up by being used as a tool for denominational propaganda. Professors of Church History in nonepiscopal colleges have sometimes been embarrassed by the presence of episcopacy in comparatively early days, but have been able to restore the situation by pointing to the evils of episcopacy. Anglicans, no doubt, can and do reply by speaking of the fissiparous tendencies of the post-Reformation church when the authority of the episcopate is impaired. This may be exciting, but it has not the ultimate relevance which we are seeking. A friend of mine for some years has been teaching Church History with some success as a series of studies in personality. If the subject is really the pilgrimage of God's people through the world, this can be a very fruitful idea. There are great Christians—made so by Christ; bad Christians, unscrupulous Christians—endured, forgiven, overruled, by Christ; great Christian thinkers, to whom it has been given to enter more deeply into God's revelation in Christ, for his glory, as doctrines have been hammered out; great administrators, who have tended the flock of Christ as his undershepherds; even scoundrels, wolves in sheep's clothing, to warn the flock of God today and even to encourage us, for the people of God has survived.

All this, especially when we realize that each man in his day and generation lived in what was to him "the actuality of the modern world," is relevant to show to the faithful that God is still the living God, at work in his world and in his church; to illustrate his dealings with those who put their trust in him; to enlarge the vision of some if not of all students,

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 45.



and show them that the church is not that queer little building at the corner of Main and Tompkins Streets but the whole fellowship of the redeemed throughout all time and space. And if to study ancient Greece is to study the modern world in miniature (who did not link Germany with uncultured, military Sparta, and Mussolini with some vulgar tyrant of the ancient world complete with bodyguard of clubmen?), surely to study Church History is to study afresh, in the quiet of the academic grove, far removed from the clash of ecclesiastical strife, the situations and problems which constantly arise in the life of the church today.

On these lines, I submit that our teaching has relevance not only to pure scholarship but to the practical task of the ministry. If we can not only teach a subject but as men of God inspire other men of God with the subject; if we can show that the Old Testament is the record of God's preparation of a people in time for the coming of Christ; that the New Testament deals with that very Son of God, making his impact on men, and, in John Masfield's phrase, "let loose in the world"; that Systematic Theology is the compacting of truths about him that he may be proclaimed; that Church History is the record of Christ's faithfulness toward his wandering and yet advancing people—if, I say, we can inspire our students with these themes and catch the imagination of our young preachers with this wealth—then our work will not be irrelevant to their ministry; especially if we join in the prayer of Cardinal John Henry Newman to "the Gracious, the Merciful God, the Father of Lights, that in all our exercises of Reason, His Gift, we may thus use it, as He would have us, in the obedience of Faith, with a view to His Glory, with an aim at His Truth, in dutiful submission to His Will, for the comfort of His elect, for the edification of Holy Jerusalem His Church."<sup>10</sup>

### III

But our troubles are not confined to the teaching of divinity. A good many of the criticisms leveled at ministerial training are, I suspect, more immediately directed at the Arts course. "Why should we be compelled to study these irrelevant subjects," it is complained, "when what we want is a course in divinity?" There are good reasons, and the Arts course should be taken unless there are more cogent reasons against it. But this raises the whole question of the subjects to be studied in Arts. I have heard it said facetiously that in preparation for the ministry nothing is irrelevant, except Household Science. Now there is some wisdom here: a man versed

<sup>10</sup> Ward, Maisie, *Young Mr. Newman*, Sheed & Ward, 1948, p. 357.

in Spanish literature, for instance, has not only what is of cultural value but access also to a whole range of illustrative material which will be fresh to most members of his congregation. A knowledge of science may open his eyes to the wonders of the world which "their great Original proclaim." On the other hand, the mathematics of Dr. Barnes, the late Bishop of Birmingham, did not so greatly benefit the church.

As a matter of fact, this question of relevance has to be considered in two aspects. Does it relate to a man who has an Arts degree and then offers himself for the ministry? Or does it relate to a man who has just passed his matriculation? In the former case many of his subjects may be considered "relevant" as they have tended to make him an educated man, though with the late Bishop of Bristol one may question the value of "a mere pass degree in botany." But if our ordinand has his Arts course before him, his subjects ought to be chosen with a view to his future ministry. They can then be "relevant" in a deeper and more useful way.

What, then, are the relevant subjects which we should choose for a man as he embarks on his Arts course? I am not here trying to arrange a time-table, but to suggest the bare subjects which he ought to cover. First there should be Hebrew and Greek, and preferably Latin as well, not necessarily as full courses in each of his three years, but as half courses according to the size of his program. The relevancy of Hebrew and Greek is obvious, and we need not dwell on it. So is that of Latin, but if one language ought to be dropped, then, let it be said with regret, it ought to be Latin. The biblical languages should have priority, and should be studied all through the Arts course. The gaining of credits in an ancient language and the subsequent abandonment of it for a year or two is to be avoided.

What should come next on our list? In his Gifford Lectures, Professor H. H. Farmer urges the desirability of dropping the word "incarnation" and substituting "inhistorisation." The suggestion is drastic if not impossible, but it has meaning for us in our deliberations.

The Christ of the Christian faith [says Dr. Farmer] is . . . fully historic . . . his whole being and life consciously rooted in, and incomprehensible apart from, the continuing history of the covenant people (both old and new) . . . furthermore, this history is itself embedded in, inseparable from, incomprehensible except as related to, the wider history of mankind by which it is always in some measure conditioned and which it in turn reciprocally conditions.

This means, for us, that our Arts student should study ancient history. If we believe in a historic incarnation, an "inhistorisation," it is supremely relevant to study what was going on in the world to which our Lord came.

And inasmuch as Church History will be studied in the divinity course, a further background of the profane history (so-called in distinction from church history) of Europe, Canada, and the United States should follow.

What of the philosophical subjects? The right order is surely Logic first and then Psychology, as a fit preparation for the History of Philosophy and Ethics; and finally the Philosophy of Religion in the strict sense of the term, the reflection on that aspect of experience which we term religion, regarded as a matter given, in accordance with philosophical principles and methods, in order to apprehend its meaning in the context of the ultimate meaning of experience as a whole.

How remote this seems from the preaching of the gospel, from ministering to the needy in a slum! But its relevance may best be shown by an illustration. Eton has sometimes been regarded as an undemocratic form of education. But, as Edward Lyttleton said, "If you have known a duke to kick, when you were a boy, you won't worry much about 'dukes' and the like in after-life."<sup>11</sup> So it is with the ordinand's philosophical studies. If he has kicked a philosophical theory down the stairs by the lecture-room or study, he will not be afraid of it when he meets it in ministerial life. If, for example, he has met with determinism and wrestled with it in college and learnt that it is self-refuting, he will not be thrown off his balance when some poor soul in the parish tells him that "everything in our life is mapped out for us," which is the poor man's determinism.

If he is to be a minister, he will need to be able to express himself in good English, which adds yet another subject to his course, the relevance of which is obvious. There will naturally be some exceptions: a man who intends to minister in South America may well wish to study Spanish or Portuguese in his Arts program. But in general the selection we have given seems most suited for a predivinity course. If it is objected that the university will not agree to such a plan, surely it is not beyond the wit of man or the influence of the church to negotiate with the university with a view to such a scheme of study for the intending minister.

And yet we may still hear the cry that it is irrelevant. It certainly has its dangers. We take a young Christian, fresh from high school, and plunge him, with the ministry in mind, into some of the deepest of the problems which have ever tormented the mind of man. At best it may be unsettling: did not Plato himself postpone the study of philosophy until the age of thirty?<sup>12</sup> At the worst it might subject him to some form of academic

<sup>11</sup> Furse, Michael, *Stand Therefore*, S.P.C.K., London, 1953, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> *Republic*, VII:537 D.

bullying. An unconverted philosopher is in a position to do a good deal of damage. A fellow student of mine studied philosophy under C. E. M. Joad for some years, before Joad in a touching penitence and humility came back to the Christian faith. We may argue that the prospective minister ought to be able to stand up for his faith, and so he should. But his antagonists, if we have the choosing of them, ought to be on the same level. Is it fair to subject the young Christian learner to the academic expert?

You will have seen by this time where all this is leading, though I admit that it may seem like crying for the moon. We shall never have a complete relevance until all our courses, Arts as well as divinity, are taught by ministers, men who have not merely had what is called "experience of work in a parish" but who at heart are preachers and pastors as well as scholars. If it is an ideal for the king and the philosopher to be united in one person, as Plato desired, and the evangelist and the theologian to be similarly united, as James Denney approved,<sup>13</sup> it may well be the case that the union of professor, preacher, and pastor will produce that relevance of method and spirit which we so urgently need. It is not enough for us to say that all this can be left to the Professor of Homiletics or the Professor of Pastoralia. That would be an intolerable burden.<sup>14</sup> We need this spirit in every lecture, at every hour, that it may be caught if not taught.

If the professor finds preaching a bore, the life of the parish something beneath his Olympian remoteness, and the evangelist a *rara avis* with whom his professional dignity cannot deal, then our more academic students may brilliantly pass all their examinations; but all those, including the academic successes, who will have to bear the burden and heat of the day, will have to seek their inspiration elsewhere. But if we are authentic men of God, men who even when immersed in knowledge yet live by faith, men for whom culture and scholarship are a worthy means to a yet more glorious end, men whose whole horizon is filled with Christ, men whose meat and drink is to know and love and serve the living Christ in the context of our immediate task, then in an intellectual environment we shall be witnesses to the truth and power of the gospel, and thereby proclaim the deeper realities implied by the subjects we teach and that ultimate relevance of our work to the people of our God.

<sup>13</sup> *Death of Christ*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1909, p. viii.

<sup>14</sup> It would be working *in vacuo*.

# Protestant Theology and Church Life

JOHN B. COBB JR.

## I

DURING THE PAST TWO CENTURIES the theology of the leading Protestant thinkers has become remote from and largely irrelevant to the general life and thought of the church. The purpose of this article is to clarify what is meant by this proposition, to consider some of the historical reasons for the situation to which it points, to evaluate the results of this separation, and to indicate elements in the contemporary scene which may point toward the possibility of a more wholesome relationship in the near future between serious theological scholarship and church life. To facilitate this endeavor a distinction must be made at the outset between what may be called popular Protestant thought and post-scientific theology.

What these terms mean will become clearer as the discussion proceeds, but some initial indication of what they are intended to denote is needed. By popular Protestant thought is meant in the first instance what the man in the pew of the middle-of-the-road American denomination understands by the Christian faith. By post-scientific theology is meant the understanding of the faith of those theologians who stand, either by acceptance or by reaction, in the theological traditions stemming from such modern Protestant thinkers as Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Kierkegaard, and Barth.

The post-scientific theological development has had its fullest expression on the European continent. Popular Protestant thought has developed most independently of such theology in America. Hence these two elements have been singled out as exemplifying the divergent patterns. However, on the one hand, something resembling what is here called popular Protestant thought has continued widespread on the European continent, and, on the other hand, during the past century continental patterns of theology have become increasingly determinative of theological developments in England and America. Hence the problem of the separa-

---

JOHN B. COBB, JR., M.A., Ph.D., is Assistant Professor in Historical Theology in the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Georgia. He traces the causes of recent estrangement between theological scholarship and the life of the churches, and seeks a way of reintegration.

tion between these two movements is present generally in the Protestant world, and in the contemporary American scene it has become acute.

## II

Four interrelated strands in the complex patterns of modern history may be noted as of predominant importance for the understanding of the separation of post-scientific theology and popular thought. These are: first, the impact of natural science upon general thought; second, the rise of historical consciousness especially under the aegis of the romantic movement and of Hegelian philosophy; third, the democratization of the Protestant churches; and fourth, the total pattern of socio-economic and cultural development which has made modern life altogether different from that of two or three centuries ago. The present article focuses attention upon the first of these strands.

The rise of the physical sciences has had many kinds of effect upon the thinking of Western man. Its impact has been so pervasive that both popular Protestant thought and post-scientific theology have been affected. However, they have responded to the new situation very differently. Hence there follows, first, a brief formulation of the three movements which have been the dominant intellectual by-products of the scientific advance; second, a statement of the impact of these developments upon popular Protestant thought; and third, a similar statement of the way in which post-scientific theology has met the challenge..

One of the intellectual movements resulting from the rise of natural science has been materialism. Materialism regarded itself as the world view which was the inevitable end product of the gradual extension of scientific investigation to every aspect of reality. Science portrayed an orderly universe of matter in motion, each motion being traceable to preceding motions and exhaustively explicable in terms of them. Ultimately the human mind must be understood as part of the inexorable succession of causes and effects. Since all explanation in principle appeared to be reductionistic in the direction of the motions of the least material particles, spiritual significance was necessarily excluded as a category. Although materialistic metaphysics in its earlier forms has not been acceptable since the rise of the non-Newtonian physics in the twentieth century, the relevance of the changes to the possibility of a spiritual interpretation of experience is still subject to serious dispute. The reductionistic tendency of "the scientific world view" is still a factor to be reckoned with, and for the great mass of people the older materialistic world view remains but little altered.



The second major type of intellectual development given impetus by the rise of science was modern rationalism. Rationalism stands in the closest relationship to materialism since it postulates the explanation of all natural events in terms of intelligible laws and characteristically implies the same kind of mechanistic view as materialism. Explicitly it does not necessarily except human reason from this reductionism. However, it gains its inspiration from science in an entirely different way, for it is impressed primarily not by the implicit world view of science but rather by the remarkable success of the human mind in probing the mysteries of the universe. Rationalism does not rule out the claims of religion *a priori* as does materialism, but it subjects them to its own standards of judgment. Since the viewpoint of materialism is uncompromisingly irreligious, it has been through the medium of rationalism that both of these developments have played a significant role in the thought of Protestantism.

The third kind of effect of science upon general thought was in terms of its method. Science, it has been thought, became successful when men limited their concepts to what they could experience through their sense organs and gave themselves over to the most careful and objective measurement of the sensory data. Empiricism rather than rationalism or materialism has been felt by many to be the true lesson of science.

### III

The impact of the intellectual developments stemming from the rise of science upon popular religious thought may be summarized under three headings: first, a more or less materialistic rationalism; second, empiricism; and third, the higher criticism of the Bible.

Popular religious thought under the influence of rationalism was from the first concerned with the question of the limitation of science and of scientific reason. The limitations sought have been of two kinds. First, are there facts about the universe for which science cannot account? If so, then here there is room for a supernatural explanation. Or, second, does reason support belief in the suprarational status of some authority such as the Bible? If so, then here, independently of direct rational support, there is certain knowledge of God. If reason, which is equated with science and the scientific world-view, can explain everything, and if reason does not support the idea of divine authorship of Scripture, then there is little room left for religion. However, since there are still gaps in the scientific explanation of the world, and since the Bible in one way or another can still be regarded as divinely inspired, acceptance of many of the beliefs it contains

is still quite possible and is very advantageous on social, moral, and psychological grounds.

In very important respects the indirect effect of rationalism upon popular religious thinking has been to push religion entirely into the realm of the supernatural. This is understood essentially as a realm of actual existence to which the findings of science can never be relevant. It manifests itself in the natural realm in breaks in the natural order of creation, in events transcendent or contradictory to that order, or in a supernatural book. The supernatural realm is primarily important in this frame of reference because upon death the immortal portion of each self enters therein, and secondarily (for some) because certain events, such as healings, may still occur by supernatural intervention in the natural order.

Intimately related to this frame of reference for many Protestants is some kind of empiricism. The final evidence of truth is experience, and from the reality of subjective experience there can be no appeal. The experience may be of God himself, of the forgiveness of sins, of peace of mind and spirit, of increased vitality, even of general personal success as a result of following a specified religious discipline. To what extent this emphasis upon personal experience as authoritative for belief is to be seen as a reflection of the prestige of scientific method is certainly debatable. It arises in part out of the New Testament itself, and no period of Christian history has altogether lacked this note. Yet in more recent days, as the authority of tradition has been undermined and the supernatural evidences for supernatural truths have become less convincing, the analogy of experiential evidence to that employed in the sciences has been increasingly important in popular apologetic.

The relationship of the rise of science to the development of biblical criticism was much less direct. Actually, although rationalism contributed to the critical development, the rise of historical consciousness was still more pronouncedly its source. However, its impact upon Protestant thought must be noted. Protestants were first driven by the scientific world view to a radically supernatural interpretation of biblical authority, only to be confronted with an impressive array of facts and interpretations all tending to stress the human element in the authorship of Scripture. A minority closed their minds to this possibility, feeling that it rendered all Christian truth suspect and precarious. The majority gradually allowed themselves to admit the human element in the Bible, contenting themselves with the view that there is also something supernatural either in the Bible itself, or in some of the events it records such as the resurrection, or in the per-

sonality of Jesus, or in the success of the Christian movement, or in the effects which acceptance of biblical truth has upon the believer.

The net result of the success of science in combination with other factors noted above upon the popular Protestant mentality in the non-sacramental, nonfundamentalist churches has been a gradual retreat from definiteness of conviction, an increasing distrust of logical consistency and systematic thought about ultimate reality in general, a growing reliance upon emotion over against reason, a narrowing of the realm of certainty about the supernatural to God and immortality, and an increasing identification of Christianity with bourgeois moral standards and with a legalistic interpretation of specific religious duties.

#### IV

Post-scientific Protestant theology began with the full acknowledgement of the total consequence of the scientific world view and method for religious thought in such a way as to preclude the possibility of being driven to retreat step by step before its advance. Whereas the churches were rocked to their foundations by the controversies over evolution and "higher criticism," these caused hardly a stir among intellectual circles where the full effect of such developments had been long since discounted. Realizing that Christianity could never rest securely upon the residue of scientific ignorance and could not remain true to its genius while engaged in mortal combat with the progress of scientific truth, the more serious Protestant theologians undertook to rethink what was central to Protestant faith in the light of man's new knowledge of the world and the proved success of his method of gaining that knowledge. The concept of the supernatural as explaining those physical events which science could not explain was repudiated at the start. What was needed was either to find God operative in the order of nature now disclosed by science or to indicate the intrinsic limits of the scientific *method* and the dimensions of experience or life to which it is *in principle* irrelevant.

The repudiation of the struggle against science meant from the first the repudiation of the inerrancy of Scripture and indeed in general of an emphasis upon literal acceptance of much of its teaching. The theologian was concerned to establish the truth of that which seemed to him to be the vital heart of the Christian message, whether this was understood in terms of its distinctiveness from other religions or in terms of what it shared with all religion. The vital heart of the Christian message might be seen as personal experience of God in Christ, as the Kingdom of God as

the end of all endeavor, as a particular understanding of history or of the world in general, or as the full development of human personality as the real seat of the divine. Far from being disturbed by the rise of higher criticism, and of the sociology, the history, and the psychology of religion, the effort to formulate and defend what is "really important" in the Christian message has always presupposed and implied such study of the Bible, man, and history.

## V

Although the separation of post-scientific theology and the life of the churches is to be deplored, it must be acknowledged to have been necessary. It would have been disastrous for Protestantism if, during the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth, the great mass of Protestants had seriously accepted the leadership of whatever theologian happened at the moment to be in the forefront of scholarly attention. One extreme development would have followed another, and the result in the life of the church would have been utterly chaotic. The church has had no choice but to live its life in independence of academic theological controversies, accepting only gradually a very little of their total precipitate.

Yet the church has paid a terrible price. Despite the increased number of years of education of the average urban preacher, the level of preaching in the urban pulpit is appallingly low. An astonishing proportion of Protestant preaching consists primarily in rather generalized exhortation to virtue and piety and equally generalized opposition to secularism and the despiritualization of modern life. When any greater explicitness is achieved along these lines, all too often matters are only made worse, for the implicit legalism of the generalized preaching becomes painfully apparent. Against the background of this kind of preaching there appears, *almost* as a relief, the popular "peace of mind" variety.

A substantial number of other sermons are, indeed, devoted to theological topics, such as the Trinity, Christology, heaven and hell, conversion, or the sacraments, but in the great majority of cases these topics are treated in an embarrassingly untheological manner. Indeed, efforts at preaching theological sermons only accentuate the fact made painfully evident by the other common types that few contemporary preachers have really incorporated into their basic patterns of thought the essentials of Protestant-Christian-Biblical theology, while at the same time many of them seem either unaware of this failure or indifferent to it. Unfortunately, what is true of the preachers is all the more true of the laymen, even the most consecrated and devout among them, whose lives, though far more richly

Christian than the theology which they articulate, are nevertheless impoverished by a basic ignorance of the Christian gospel. Needless to say, such generalizations as these are altogether unfair to many thousands of preachers and laymen, but as generalizations they have nevertheless a certain painful truth.

For the theologians as well, the separation has been necessary. Apart from the freedom granted the theological scholar by his autonomy from the church in the great universities of Germany and to a lesser extent in the other parts of the Protestant world, the serious effort to find "truth" within a Protestant perspective would probably have been thwarted in much the same way as in the Roman Catholic Church. All serious objective study of Christianity would have been carried on in the purely secular world and would have taken an almost unqualifiedly negative form. By now it would have become almost impossible to be both a sincere Protestant Christian and a serious member of the contemporary intellectual community.

Nevertheless, the post-scientific theologians have also paid a high price for their emancipation. To a very great extent their exposition and their defense of Christianity have not been of a Christianity really capable of holding together the Christian community in fellowship and devotion. Since they have directed their work primarily toward their fellow theologians and scholars, they have often been carried away by the argument and by the logic of the position appropriate to it to extremes which, in the long run, are both un-Christian and rationally untenable. Some have adopted the standards of success created by the scholarly community rather than those of the Christian movement, and have devoted themselves rather to the winning of theological debates than to the intellectual uplifting of their people. Certainly not all have displayed in their own lives and conduct the Christian virtues of meekness and charity, and perhaps some have not understood from within the fundamental meaning of the Christian faith as did most of the great theologians down through the Protestant Reformation.

## VI

The picture which has been drawn of the contemporary situation in Protestantism is not a pleasant one. The weakness of Protestantism in confrontation with Roman Catholicism on the one hand and with thoroughgoing secularism on the other can be readily understood from this perspective. Neither the popular nor the post-scientific tradition within Protestantism, despite the real vitality of each, appears to afford the an-

swer. Surely the time has come when the leaders of Protestantism must undertake seriously the task of reintegrating serious, honest theology into the life of the churches.

Although as yet rather little progress has been made in this direction, no day has been more promising than our own for the success of a supreme effort. Several trends affecting Protestant thinking of both types have united to create the conditions under which some real reintegration may well be possible.

Since World War II many of the more thoughtful Protestant laymen and ecclesiastics have begun to realize how ill-equipped they are to formulate and defend at an intellectual level what they cherish in their hearts. Courses and talks on Christian, Protestant, or denominational beliefs have considerable popularity, although they are not always successful in achieving their purposes. Good theological preaching is often sincerely appreciated by church people, and even theological books, when properly written, meet with some success.

At the same time theologians have increasingly realized their debt to the church and the importance of a deep rootage in the ongoing life of the Christian community. Theological systems which have their value in maintaining the intellectual respectability of Protestantism in scholarly debate are seen to be pitifully helpless both in the face of fundamental attacks upon Christianity itself from the Nazi or the Communist, and against the continuous encroachment of a pagan secularism. Also it is increasingly realized that the very grounds for belief in the system rest on something which intellect can neither achieve nor fully express. Thus from each segment of Protestant thought there has developed an important awareness of incompleteness.

In regard to some of the specific cognitive elements in the two strands of Protestant thinking, the edge of the antagonism has been blunted. Despite the vociferous insistence of a strong segment of popular Protestantism that the literal infallibility of the words of the Bible is a sacrosanct dogma, the great majority of Protestants are confused in this regard and vaguely disturbed about their confusion. They demand that at least something supernatural about the Bible must be recognized, and they are quite sure that the Bible must be in some way authoritative. However, for the most part they are ignorant of its contents and frankly admit what they call their inability to understand it. By this admission they mean that they do not find in the Bible the expected corroboration of the views which they have absorbed from their fellow church-goers. They are re-



ceptive as never before to explanations of the Bible based upon higher criticism, even though they may still abhor the term.

Meanwhile the post-scientific theologian has come to a renewed recognition of the normativeness of the Bible for Christian belief and has come to treat it with a new respect, if not with the reverence for the book itself which often characterizes the popular perspective. The excitement engendered by many of the rather radical and far-fetched theories of the past has died down. The technical, objective, critical attitude so important in the earlier phases has been superseded by an enthusiastic reaffirmation of basic biblical truths.

## VII

Between the two perspectives, however, there still remains a wide gulf. The theologian for the most part "radicalizes" biblical doctrines. That is, whatever he may regard as the probability of the literal historical or scientific reliability of a particular statement, he seeks instead the fundamental interpretation of life, of history, and of man's relation to God and to his fellow man which is expressed in the passage or book. It is at this level that the Scriptures have regained their real normativeness for the theological perspective. A Barth may, when pressed, affirm that he believes that the virgin birth "really did take place," but his interest in the virgin birth centers not in the literal accuracy of the account as miraculous evidence for suprarational beliefs, but rather in the implications of such an idea for the total conception of God's relation to man in Christ. Those adhering to the popular perspective cannot grasp this process of "radicalization." They still seek to learn what is factually true in the biblical record and to ground their faith upon that. Because they are not accustomed to think in terms of conflicting world views but rather in terms of conflicting affirmations in regard to particular historical facts, they are bewildered by the relative indifference of post-scientific theologians to such facts.

Another closely related aspect of the mutual misunderstanding and mistrust needs also to be mentioned. Large numbers of contemporary American Protestants are so deeply rooted in some form of moralistic pietism that they cannot conceive what else Christianity can be. To be more Christian is simply to be more rigorously moral and to observe more regularly the pious practices of Bible reading, church attendance, and above all prayer! On the other hand, most leading theologians either have never understood Christianity in pietistic terms, or have reacted so decisively against that understanding that they regard the term itself as one of opprobrium.

It is partly for this reason that matters of intense concern to the average earnest Protestant seem naïve and peripheral to the theologian, and that issues which absorb the energies of the theologian often appear academic and unimportant to the churchman. The pietist focuses his attention inevitably on the questions: "What ought I to experience? what ought I to do? how ought I to pray? how can I understand that to which I pray? how can I achieve the feelings and attitudes I believe I ought to have?" The theologian, however, seeks to clarify the Christian conception of man in his relation to nature, to history, to the church, to himself, and to God. He is exercised over the interrelationships of religion with socio-cultural and economic developments. He is interested in determining which of the doctrines of the church were affected by which cultural or philosophical traditions. Of late he has been deeply concerned to understand more genuinely the fundamental way of thinking of the biblical writers. But he rarely brings all this wealth of understanding directly to bear upon the questions asked by the contemporary pietist, and when he does so he is understood only with the greatest difficulty.

Thus, although there seems to be a real readiness on both sides, the task of reintegration is no easy one. The leadership must come from the side of the post-scientific theologian, because only the theologian is likely to have the necessary self-consciousness about beliefs. The theologian must cultivate to a much greater degree an appreciation of the real strength and value of much of the spirit of contemporary pietism. His task will be one of education, but he cannot educate until he can wholeheartedly accept that which is valid in the popular perspective. Until the Protestant community is certain that what it cherishes most is not the object of critical attack, that it is rather accepted as the foundation for growth, it will turn a deaf ear to all would-be educators.

The task of re-education of the people of Protestantism is of stupendous proportions. However, the present situation renders it a possible task to a far greater degree than heretofore. Since World War II it has become clear that the largest Protestant churches have definitely committed themselves to filling their pulpits with the graduates of theological seminaries. At the same time seminaries have recognized that the education of a minister should include some study of theology proper. This means that within a few decades the great majority of Protestant pulpits will be filled by men who have studied at least a little theology.

The responsibility of the teachers of theology—biblical, historical, and systematic—is very great indeed. It is a responsibility which they cannot

fulfil unless they achieve in their own understanding a genuine integration of the theological and popular perspectives. The real value, the real truth of both perspectives must be accepted unequivocally, wholeheartedly, and with enthusiasm. Students must be helped to achieve a theological frame of reference out of which they can speak to their people with perfect honesty and real Christian insight upon issues of importance in the common Protestant life. Gradually they will communicate also, whether consciously or not, the frame of reference itself.

# The Socio-Ethical Ambiguities of Religion

OLIVER READ WHITLEY

IN A TIME WHEN we are being told on every hand that a great religious revival is taking place, and when we are being exhorted to "return to religion," it is perhaps impertinent to question either the genuineness or the validity of what is taking place religiously. Yet if one is not convinced that merely because there is "piety along the Potomac,"<sup>1</sup> and because we have added the words "under God" to the flag salute, we can be certain of God's kindly disposition toward us, what then?

The question is, what functions does religion actually serve in society? This query concerning the objective and observable consequences and uses of religion has both sociological and ethical implications. Moreover, many of the great religious geniuses have begun their contributions to man's spiritual well-being at this very point of questioning what purposes were being served by the current religious developments. The truth is that religion is, both socially and ethically, ambiguous. This is the proposition which we propose to discuss in this paper.

## I

Since a great deal of our discussion hinges upon the word "ambiguity," it may be useful to set forth more precisely what we have in mind in the use of the term. The College Standard Dictionary defines ambiguity as "capable of being understood in more senses than one."<sup>2</sup> The functions of religion to be discussed in what follows are, quite literally, "capable of being understood in more senses than one." This is especially apparent in the realms of the social and ethical.

Reinhold Niebuhr, more than twenty years ago, put his finger on the point which needs to be made here. "Religious people," wrote Niebuhr, "have assumed too easily that a religious life must issue not only in private rectitude but in perfect social attitudes. This overestimate of its social use-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the brilliant article by this title, by William Miller in *The Reporter*, XI (No. 3, August 17, 1954), pp. 25-28.

<sup>2</sup> Funk and Wagnalls, 1942, p. 42.

---

OLIVER R. WHITLEY, B.D., Ph.D., is Professor of Sociology at Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma. He examines the balance between values and disvalues in the present revival of religion as an American social phenomenon.

fulness easily creates a reaction of criticism which denies that there is any useful counsel in religion for the problems of society. . . ."<sup>3</sup> To interpret the relation of religion to society in any simple way is grossly to misunderstand this relation. The social and ethical usefulness of religion is, in a complex urban society based upon impersonal and secondary relationships, easily frustrated by the intricacies and relativities that exist in such a society.

The social and ethical implications of religion may be, logically and ideally, clear. But when religious insights, attitudes, and experiences are injected into the historical process their meaning becomes, in any objective appraisal, ambiguous. It is clear that religious belief and behavior *ought* to function in socially and ethically useful ways. Yet whether they do or not remains, in any particular instance, to be determined by an objective inquiry. The discussion which follows will amply illustrate the point that religion, as it functions in society, is socially and ethically ambiguous.

To accomplish our objective, we may take as our frame of reference the functions which sociologists and anthropologists have set forth as the ones which seem to recur in the history of man's religions. In discussing the functions of religion,<sup>4</sup> we shall make use of the formulation suggested by Professor J. O. Hertzler,<sup>5</sup> as a convenient outline. An important premise in the argument is that religion is not ethically neutral. Its ethical implications are of paramount importance. This is why one cannot accept at face value the apparently tacit contention that the more people who profess "religion," or who "make decisions for Christ" (to use the current cliché), the better it will be for the world. As a religiously concerned observer one must, the writer believes, add an emphatic "not necessarily!" In religious and ethical matters, least of all, can one take things at face value, or "as advertised." Hence our interest in the problem of the present paper.

## II

One major function of religion in human societies has certainly been the *promotion of religious experience*. Here we have in mind such matters as the building in individual personalities of a sense of communion with a world which transcends the world of sense experience, a sense of security in an orderly universe, of oneness with the "eternal," of consistent and

<sup>3</sup> Niebuhr, R., *Does Civilization Need Religion?* The Macmillan Company, 1928, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> In using the term *function*, we have reference, not to the ideal or intended purposes of religious belief and behavior, but to its objective and observable functions, i.e., not what it is supposed to do, but what it actually does.

<sup>5</sup> Hertzler, J. O., "Religious Institutions," in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, CCLVI, March, 1948.

dependable meaning for life. No one who has read deeply and considered widely the records of man's religious experiences can discount the tremendous contribution which religions have made in these regards.

Having said this, however, we must go on to point out the problem which arises. To get at this problem we may contrast two statements. A. N. Whitehead writes, "Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things; . . . something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach. . . . The fact of religious vision . . . is our one ground for optimism. Apart from it, human life is a flash of occasional enjoyments lighting up a mass of pain and misery. . . ." <sup>6</sup> For contrast, place this statement beside one emanating from the theological headquarters of American religion, Hollywood. From here, listen to Miss Jane Russell, who was quoted in the newspapers not too long ago as saying, "God, when you get to know him, is a livin' doll."

Perhaps, you will say, this is an unfair comparison. But I submit that it is more than intellectual snobbery if one argues that there is a profound gulf between Dr. Whitehead and Miss Russell. Whitehead stands, intellectually and spiritually, in the tradition of Augustine's "Lord, our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee;" Miss Russell stands, as nearly as I can tell, on a sheet of tissue paper over a deep abyss. Yet both attempts to get at the heart of religion would have to be included under this first function of religion.

The writer has no disposition to indulge in the contemporary pastime of Hollywood-baiting. One does not need to go to California to find similar examples of alarming childishness. The impression is easily obtained from dropping in at the nearest Sunday-school class, that somehow the deepest religious need of men is to be assured that "every cloud has a silver lining," and that those who doubt this are just old sourpusses. The Christian doctrines of creation, sin, redemption, and salvation, each profound in its meaning and implications, are made to sound like minor elaborations on the theme of American optimism.

A brief conversation with even the most apparently religious young people will often bring distressing evidence that they consider "Have You Talked to the Man Upstairs?" and "I Believe" to be valid, and even profound, contributions to the Christian faith. Miss Russell's statement by itself would not be particularly significant, except that it is part of a pattern. This pattern is one in which, apparently, many Americans consider such

<sup>6</sup> Whitehead, A. N., *Science and the Modern World*, The Macmillan Company, 1927, p. 275.



statements as profound theological utterances. This is no issue of arguing that important thoughts must be clothed in big words, but it is an issue of the limits of banality to which popular expressions of "spirituality" can go. Popularly, God is apparently seen as a kind of "cosmic bell-hop," whose chief end is the glorification of man. No furthering of religious experience lies down this road.

### III

A second major function of religion, which appears to occur almost universally, is to *act as a therapeutic agent*. Again, no one who has carefully observed and studied religions in various societies can overlook the contribution of religion in this regard. The tendency for religion to be most meaningful in a time of crisis or tragedy has often been noted. The anthropologist Malinowski writes:

Both magic and religion arise and function in situations of emotional stress: crises of life, lacunae in important pursuits, death and initiation into tribal mysteries, unhappy love and unsatisfied hate. Both religion and magic open up escapes from such situations and such impasses as offer no empirical way out except by ritual and belief into the domain of the supernatural.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly, religion has its ethically and spiritually legitimate uses in times of stress and crisis. But the difficulty arises from the fact that too often magic and religion become so closely intertwined as to render this whole area ambiguous. To distinguish between magic and religion is difficult, but the effort must be made, if one is to clarify the area of ambiguity that lies at the point where the crises and tragedies of life are touched by religion.

Our difficulties here are increased by the fact that the sociologists and anthropologists offer impressive evidence that religion and magic are really parts of the same complex of human behavior, and to distinguish them requires the use of criteria which cannot be depended upon to have universal application. Yet the criteria which *are* used do have fundamental ethical implications.

"Magic . . . is actually an integral part of religion. We cannot even distinguish it fully from the worship of the gods, in terms of criteria often met with—that magic is effected by formula, while the gods are moved by prayer; or that magic is always used with reference to a specific problem, while the gods are petitioned for general well-being."<sup>8</sup> With this statement from Herskovits one familiar with the anthropological evidence would, I think, be forced to agree. But the point for our purposes is that

<sup>7</sup> Malinowski, *Magic, Science, and Religion*, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1948, p. 67.

<sup>8</sup> Herskovits, M., *Cultural Anthropology*, Alfred Knopf, 1955, p. 221.

the distinction between religion and magic, if there is one, appears to be fundamentally ethical.

Magic, as another anthropologist has put it, is

a body of techniques and methods for *controlling* the universe, on the assumption that if certain procedures are followed minutely, certain results are inevitable. It presupposes an orderly universe of cause and effect, not one in which events may occur unpredictably. . . . Magic, insofar as it is connected with religious observances, is only one of the ways in which men seek to control the supernatural powers. Another, which is far more intimately linked to religion, is found in ritual and ceremony, both of which are directed toward the supplication and appeasement of supernatural beings. Where magic . . . *compels* supernatural aid . . . , ritual and ceremony operate on the assumption that divine beings . . . can be moved to pity, appealed to for justice, pleased by sacrifices and offerings. . . .<sup>9</sup>

Despite the similarities between religion and magic,<sup>10</sup> then, there are differences, and these differences lie essentially at the point of the uses to which the respective behaviors are put. Magic is, for instance, basically *instrumental*; what it accomplishes can be either good or evil. The methods used are impersonal and ethically neutral. With magic there is an emphasis upon *personal*, rather than *social* ends. The magician's attitude is one of manipulation; the attempt is to accomplish what is wanted, regardless of implications. In contrast, religion is, at its best, *intrinsic*, being its own *raison d'être*. Religion, while it ministers to individuals, never ignores the social implications of the activities involved.

The characterizations of religion and magic just given are, to be sure, ideal types. In the actual world the two polar extremes become intertwined, and it is this which raises the question of ambiguity at the point where religion touches the crises of life, and where comfort and solace are supplied. The ambiguity becomes uncomfortably clear when one considers certain religious manifestations which are currently working the rich vein of man's responses to a time of troubles.

One example of the problem involved here is the cult of positive thinking, or what might be called "Neo-Couéism." The "peace of mind" school, as Charles D. Kean so well puts it, "is an attempt to enable men to escape the results of the cultural crisis without facing the fact that the crisis arises out of an historical situation where real problems demand solution. . . . These searches for personal confidence . . . suggest that the

<sup>9</sup> Beals, R. and Hoiyer, H., *An Introduction to Anthropology*, The Macmillan Company, 1953, p. 496.

<sup>10</sup> W. J. Goode, in a perceptive treatment of this subject (*Religion Among the Primitives*, Glencoe, The Free Press, 1951, pp. 50-51), lists the similarities as follows: (1) both are concerned with the non-empirical, (2) both stand in somewhat the same relation to Western science, (3) both are pervasively symbolic, (4) both deal with nonhuman forces, (5) both employ ritual systems, (6) both contain "anthropo-psychic" entities, and (7) both employ a set of skills and a group selected to use these skills.

tensions which threaten men can be eliminated by the use of a proper technique."<sup>11</sup>

For example, listen to the prescription of a modern practitioner of the ancient art of magic (or is it a science?).

Repeat slowly five times: "With God's help I am now emptying my mind of all anxiety, all fear, all sense of insecurity." Then say, "I believe that my mind is now emptied of all fear, all sense of insecurity." . . . Then thank God for thus freeing you from fear and go to sleep. Above all, remember that "all of us who are interested in self-improvement are fellow students in God's great spiritual laboratory."<sup>12</sup>

That is all there is to it! It is so simple that it has all been thought of many times before its modern exponent, Norman Vincent Peale, brought forth this newest pill from the medicine man's bag.

The point is not, of course, that "peace of mind" is an undesirable or an immoral goal, although it may well be both. The real question here is the terms on which the goal is achieved, and the price which is paid for it. Halford E. Luccock has, this writer believes, said just about everything that needs to be said on the subject. Writes Luccock:

When this kind of thing is poured on too steadily the result is that all tension is taken out of life. And there can be no Christianity without tension. Take the tension out of the mainspring of a watch and you have beautifully "relaxed" steel; you also have a useless piece of junk. A person can become so relaxed, so free from disturbance about anything that he likewise is a useless piece of junk.<sup>13</sup>

The great religions have always offered man a shelter from the stormy blasts of life, but not at the price of denying that the blasts exist. The Christian, for example, may claim "the peace that passeth all understanding," but not, as our modern magicians have it, as an escape from sordid realities and genuine ethical imperatives. The Christian may, then, aspire to peace of mind, but not simply to make himself a better business competitor, or to enable him "to put over that big deal" because his thoughts are positive. Perhaps it is now apparent why ambiguity lies so near to the place where religion offers comfort to the afflicted.

#### IV

A third major function of religion in human societies has been to *act as an agent of social control*. The tendency for the mores and traditions of a society to acquire a religious sanction is well known. The Christian,

<sup>11</sup> In Hutchison, J. A., ed., *Christian Faith and Social Action*, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1953, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> Peale, N. V., *The Power of Positive Thinking*, Prentice-Hall, 1952.

<sup>13</sup> *The Christian Century*, March 9, 1949, p. 297.

for example, recognizes certain imperatives in the category of "God's will." The backing of the mores by a supernatural sanction has performed a positive function in many societies. It has given the ways of men in particular societies a force and appeal which they otherwise would not have had. This function of religion has been indispensable in buttressing the idea that the moral rules by which men are supposed to live are not merely somebody's whim, but are somehow a part of "the nature of things," that this is a moral universe in which we live.

Ambiguities arise, however, in at least two respects. This function of religion becomes socially and ethically ambiguous when it is made use of by individuals or groups to foster interests of their own, and when it is employed to give backing to picayune and restricted moralities. In the first instance, one may cite the numerous cases where a "pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by" type of religion has been fostered by the privileged classes, in order that their will might be more easily worked upon the masses. The uses of piety in this regard are well known, and need not be recounted in detail here.

The second instance brings to mind the numerous Plainvilles, U. S. A. In Plainville, as James West tells us, "The daily interests of most people . . . seem not be religious at all, but work ('making a living'), sociability, and gossip. Yet religion seems to permeate the daily air . . . as a vital concern with the negations on moral conduct which the churches set up. The religious control of morals operates mainly through gossip and the fear of gossip."<sup>14</sup> It is difficult to believe that the interests of religion, pure and undefiled, are served by the omnipresent surveillance of Mrs. Grundy.

# V

A fourth major function of religion has been to *promote social integration and solidarity*. This function has been quite evident in the studies of nonliterate societies. The French sociologist, Durkheim, argued that this function of religion was its primary one. In fact, he *defined* religion as ". . . a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things . . . beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community . . . all those who adhere to them."<sup>15</sup> Durkheim came to the conclusion that a society possesses a common religion, that is, a system of common values, which are shared, and without which no society could continue to exist.

<sup>14</sup> West, J., *Plainville, USA*, Columbia University Press, 1945, p. 162 (italics mine).

<sup>15</sup> Durkheim, E., *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Swain, The Macmillan Company, 1915, p. 47.

Certainly, religious systems can and have functioned as rallying points, drawing men together in common unity. Yet, the way to accepting this as a generalization of universal application is far from clear. R. K. Merton has called attention to the difficulties.

Typically, in non-literate societies, there is but one prevailing religious system, so that apart from individual deviants, the membership of the total society and the membership of the religious community are virtually coextensive. Obviously, in this type of social structure, a common set of religious values may have as *one* of its consequences the reinforcement of common sentiments and of social integration.<sup>16</sup>

In complex societies, where multiple religious systems are present, it is pertinent to ask the following questions. In a multi-religion society, in what sense does religion make for the integration of *the* society? Do non-religious people less often subscribe to common values and ends than those devoted to religious doctrines? How can religion integrate the society in instances where religious and nonreligious values conflict? <sup>17</sup> Only a sublime semantic confusion could lead to the conclusion that a Jehovah's Witnesses pamphlet passer, a sedate middle-class Methodist minister, a storefront church fire-eater, a radio preacher who identifies the National Council of Churches as the Anti-Christ, and a high-church Episcopalian priest share a common faith that unites them in a moral community.

## VI

A final function of religion is that of *influencing other societal institutions*. Numerous studies of nonliterate societies have noted the complex web which ties religion, the family, the economic organization, and the political structure together.<sup>18</sup> The precise and detailed way in which religion influences, and is influenced by, other areas of society is a matter for careful empirical study. No grandiose generalizations have yet emerged, since the variables are so complex, and the interconnections so often latent or indirect.

Yet the evidence we have seems to support the conclusion that socio-economic factors have more often shaped religious institutions than they have been shaped by them. Perhaps the most outstanding treatment of the interrelationships between religious and economic institutions is Liston Pope's study of Gastonia,<sup>19</sup> which may be employed to illustrate our point. Pope, in developing the orientation for his study, suggested that theoretic-

<sup>16</sup> Merton, R. K., *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1951, pp. 31-32.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>18</sup> An outstanding one is the study by W. J. Goode, already referred to in note 10.

<sup>19</sup> Pope, L., *Millhands and Preachers*, Yale University Press, 1941.

cally there are six types of possible relations between religious and economic institutions. Religious institutions might, in *dynamic* terms, be a *source* of economic changes or a *product* of prior economic changes; in *static* terms they might be a *sanction* of the prevailing economic culture, or an *antagonist* to it; in *functional* terms, they might be *indifferent* or *irrelevant* to the economic sphere.<sup>20</sup>

Briefly, the conclusions of Pope's study, in terms of the framework just given, may be summarized.<sup>21</sup> In the beginning (of the history of Gastonia as a textile mill town) the churches supported the coming and the development of the mills, and gave religious sanction to the process. They became both source and sanction for the economic process of mill growth. With the development of industry social classes emerged, and it was not long before "class" churches came into being. In the churches of the mill workers, religion was of the pie-in-the-sky variety; it gave sanction to the prevailing culture. In the uptown churches, religion also functioned as a sanction, in this case of what the paternalistic mill-owners were doing. The ministers resisted the idea that religion is irrelevant to economic life, but insisted that the church should not become "embroiled" in economic matters. As a result, the church's individual salvation strategy was irrelevant to what was actually going on.

One of Pope's final conclusions is directly related to our present interest. "Religious institutions can be a source of culture transformations only as they transcend the immediate culture in which they function. Their insistence that they already have a transcendence of this sort is largely unwarranted so far as economic and social standards are concerned."<sup>22</sup>

The point, of course, is not that religious institutions do not and can not exert a transforming influence in community life. The danger, and the potential ambiguity, lie in the tacit assumption, which is so distressingly often uttered from pulpits throughout the land, to the effect that the church, merely because it is there, in the community, lifts the level of life in that community. Where, we who sit in the pews are often asked, would we be without the churches? The question is usually rhetorical, and the pulpit's answer is obvious. But it ought not to be. The influence of the church can, and in many cases has been, tremendous for good. That it is good, however, cannot merely be taken for granted. The *proclaiming* and the realization of the Kingdom of God are, after all, two vastly different things.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>21</sup> Here perhaps oversimplified. The reader is referred to the complete study for further details.

<sup>22</sup> Pope, L., *op. cit.*, p. 334.



## VII

A concluding word, regarding the concerns which have prompted this analysis of the ambiguities of religion, remains to be added. First, we share with Whitehead the feeling that in contemporary society, "Religion is tending to degenerate into a decent formula wherewith to embellish comfortable life."<sup>23</sup> The signs do appear to point to some kind of revival of religious interest in our society; but the manifest motivations of this revival, if it exists, look to this writer to be at best all the wrong ones.

Go to church, the television announcer tells us—it will be good for you. You will feel better and your family will be united. The community will benefit too, because your very presence in church indicates that you are a person of honesty and integrity. This is what we are told, and it may be true, but not necessarily. The evidence would seem to show that religion, when not based fundamentally upon its *intrinsic* values and merits, does not produce the *extrinsic* results which are so often glibly asserted on its behalf.

The description of religion in Middletown given by the Lynds appears to this writer to be all too generally true. To the Lynds, a local college boy remarked concerning the religious emphasis of the Y.M.C.A., "All they have to offer on why Christianity is the truth is that it has lasted so long . . . I believe these things (Christianity) but they don't take a big place in my life."<sup>24</sup> This, say the Lynds, epitomizes the attitude of Middletown.

The trouble goes deeper, however. For, "When this world of religious values cuts athwart Middletown's labor problem, or the city's devotion to such more immediate symbols as those identified with 'patriotism,' people's reactions are almost invariably determined by their loyalty to these more immediate things rather than to religious symbols."<sup>25</sup> In view of this situation, the conclusion that "the apparent role of religion in Middletown (is) as an emotionally stabilizing agent, relinquishing to other agencies leadership in the defining of values,"<sup>26</sup> is hardly surprising. Apparently religion, far from being the source of the social values which activate the moral life, *may* often be simply the guarantor, the earnest, of values arising from other, potentially unethical sources.

A second concern guiding this paper is both personal and intellectual. On the personal side, the consideration of the ambiguities of religion is

<sup>23</sup> Whitehead, A. N., *op. cit.*, pp. 269-270.

<sup>24</sup> Lynd, R. and M., *Middletown in Transition*, Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1937, p. 305.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

important to any religiously concerned and oriented person who is deeply distressed by the lack of clarity in the religious witness now available in our society, as is the writer. Intellectually, the problem of ambiguity in religion is important in two ways. For one thing, much more study must be undertaken before the precise details of the dynamics of religion in societies can be made clear. Secondly, it seems clear that those who are disrupted by the kinds of ambiguities discussed in the preceding pages can do nothing to remove them until they first recognize and understand with more clarity their nature and dimensions. Finally, an ethico-religious note needs to be sounded. Contemporary Christendom greatly needs to distinguish the essence of religion, in the objective sense of the revelation of God to man, from the current ceremonials of the cult of the American "tribe."

# Methodist Theology in America in the Nineteenth Century

LELAND H. SCOTT

AMERICAN METHODISM has never been considered a particularly fruitful field for the student of historical theology or of the history of ideas.<sup>1</sup> This has been the case even with Methodist historians, especially those writing from the twentieth-century perspective. At best, Methodism's histories include only sections on the Wesleyan doctrinal heritage, with some irregular attention to doctrinal characteristics in the American development. Although given to periodic self-appraisal, the American Methodists generally have not submitted their nineteenth-century theological background to any careful scrutiny. It is in this heritage, however, that we see the emergence of emphases characteristic of Methodism in the twentieth century—its understanding of the theological task, its interpretation of the Wesleyan theology, its attitude toward science, biblical criticism, and evangelical doctrine.

It has been customary for America's theological historians to restrict their attention in the mid-nineteenth century to developments within the Calvinistic theologies or within counter philosophical theologies. Little or no attention, for instance, has been given the insistence by American Methodists themselves on the uniqueness of their own theology—especially, in confirming the popular reaction against extreme Calvinism without capitulating to the moralistic extremes represented in revisionist Calvinism (the New Divinity). The failure of the historians of nineteenth-century American Christianity and American culture to consider Methodism's indigenous theological activity represents a serious omission in their interpretive accounts. Indeed, the evidence of intimate association between American Methodism and the emergent thought patterns of American Christianity simply confirms the importance of studying Methodism's ideological character and development. (It was Matthew Arnold who attributed the mediocrity of American intellectual culture to the existence of so many

---

<sup>1</sup> In subsequent references to "American Methodism," our attention will be mostly restricted to the United States, and to developments in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and (after 1845) the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

---

LELAND H. SCOTT, B.D., Ph.D., is Minister of Enterprise Community Methodist Church in Compton, California, and Lecturer in Church History at the University of Southern California's School of Religion. The present article is a brief summary of his doctoral dissertation (Yale).

followers of Wesley's third-rate mind!)<sup>2</sup> Actually, Methodism's pragmatic and evangelical orthodoxy—its concern for the practical and experiential application of evangelical doctrines—proved as relevant to the American scene as did its connectional plan for the itinerating ministry.

In many minds, the connotations of "Methodist theology" are supplied either from an acquaintance with original Wesleyan emphases, or from an awareness of certain emphases in contemporary American Methodism. Any understanding of interim theological characteristics usually is restricted to the early frontier, "circuit rider" period (still largely in the Wesleyan mood), or to the transitional period at the close of the last century (a period marked by the emergence of significantly new philosophical and theological emphases). But even these two periods merely serve to bracket the nineteenth century. There are at least two intervening generations of American Methodist life and thought which are not included. The elemental theological characteristics of this Middle period (ca. 1825-85) simply are not known in our own day. Thus there is not even an adequate basis for estimating its significance, or lack of it!

But why this neglect of the study of Methodist theology in America in the nineteenth century? In some ways, it is a part of a general lack of concern in America for the elements in our own intellectual past. In the existent studies of church history and religious thought in America one finds a preoccupation either with the very early "formative" periods (which certainly are important!) or with the very immediate backgrounds of contemporary religious thought. Indeed, part of the reason for the lack of attention to intervening developments is the very spirit of emancipation and freedom from mid-nineteenth-century conservatism which has so characterized modern thought in America.<sup>3</sup>

But beyond these general cultural factors, there are certain elements intrinsic to American Methodism itself which have contributed to the neglect of any *theological* study of its development. In part, it is a result of the insistence, common among American Methodists, that theirs is not a "doctrinal" church! Somewhat related to this has been the dependence by many Methodists themselves on certain simple stereotypes with respect to the dominant features in their message. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that much of the energy of American Methodism has been devoted,

<sup>2</sup> Arnold, M., "A Word About America," in *Civilization in the United States*. Boston: DeWolfe, Fiske and Company, 1900, pp. 85ff.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, see Knudson's characterization of "the crude realism and authoritarianism" of Methodist theology prior to H. C. Sheldon, in an article on "Methodism" which may be found in *An Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by V. Fern, Philosophical Library, 1945.

not to theological refinement, but to the practical problems of evangelism, expansion, ecclesiastical discipline, and social reform. And through it all there has been the familiar insistence that Methodism's unique concern was with the realities of evangelical experience, rather than with the problems of theological reflection.

The neglect of such theological history within American Methodism, though perhaps understandable, has had the following serious historical effects: (1) an uncritical reliance on certain traditional formulations of the Wesleyan doctrinal emphases; (2) inadequate interpretations as to the later disposition of certain emphases in Wesleyan Methodism; (3) serious misunderstandings of the nature and significance of theological inquiry within Wesleyan Methodism.

#### A BRIEF HISTORICAL PROFILE

Methodist theology in America began, in the manner of the Wesleyan revival, through the preaching of those for whom evangelical reality was a truth of dramatic personal experience. Next to the Bible itself, the writings of Wesley and Fletcher were the primary religious source books in American Methodism's first generation. But gradually there emerged an indigenous theological concern occasioned by issues somewhat peculiar to the American context (involving revisionist Calvinism, Universalism, etc.). A system of periodical publications and a profusion of "contemporary" polemical literature was provided by such men as Nathan Bangs and Wilbur Fisk.<sup>4</sup> But polemic was not enough. There arose a concern within American Methodism for more systematic presentations of evangelical truth—presentations which would be appropriate to the demands of intellectual contemporaneity while still oriented in terms of a Scriptural-evangelical heritage. After some initial attempts at adapting the works of nineteenth-century British Wesleyans (Adam Clarke and, especially, Richard Watson), there emerged a gradual independence in systematic theology among American Methodists—spearheaded by such men as Warren and Whedon, and carried out by Raymond, Summers, Miley, et al.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Nathan Bangs (d. 1862) was American Methodism's first major polemicist, historian and theological editor. Wilbur Fisk (d. 1839) was its first college president, and one of its most perceptive and influential doctrinal spokesmen.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Whedon (d. 1885) was the editor of Methodism's chief theological journal (the *Methodist Quarterly Review*) through three critical decades in American thought, 1856-84. Beyond this, he was an active biblical commentator, and was looked upon as a representative spokesman of Methodism's doctrinal position. William F. Warren (d. 1929), theologically trained at Andover, Halle, and Berlin, became a leader in theological-intellectual developments at Boston where he was dean of the School of Theology (at intervals, between 1867 and 1911) and president of the University (1869-1903). Miner Raymond (at Garrett Biblical Institute, d. 1897), Thomas Summers (Vanderbilt University's first theological dean, d. 1882), and John Miley (at Drew Theological Seminary, d. 1895) were American Methodism's first systematic theologians.

Methodism's theological literature, although sometimes prosaic and repetitious, did assume a discernible place in the contemporary American doctrinal discussions, endeavoring somewhat successfully<sup>5</sup> to maintain a median position between the contextual extremes of religious liberalism and theological scholasticism. American Methodism was especially critical of those religious philosophies which sought emancipation from traditional Protestant orthodoxy. The Methodist polemic proceeded out of a concern to sustain a doctrinal position adequate both to the traditions of Christian soteriology and to the practical realities of evangelical experience.<sup>6</sup> (Such a concern was not affected immediately by the declining emphasis on the empirical associations of Christian conversion, a transition which did affect inherited Wesleyan emphases on Christian experience. Methodism's most significant contribution to the American discussions was by way of its stress on the *gracious* foundations of man's present moral freedom (the doctrine of "gracious ability").

Actually, much of the character of Methodist theology in the mid-nineteenth century may be characterized as an effort to present a systematic dialectic over against the revisionist claims of American Calvinism (especially where the doctrine of moral agency was involved). It was partly under the pressure of such a concern—and partly under the influence of "common-sense" philosophical criteria—that Methodism's theologians were led into a critique of certain "ambiguities" in the soteriology and theological anthropology inherited from the Wesleys. The ultimate effect of such critical tendencies was a major *reorientation* of Methodist theology in terms of a highly nominalistic doctrine of moral responsibility (limited in terms of an unequivocal doctrine of the will's freedom of contrary choice). Redemptive grace was no longer the supremely unitive element in Methodism's doctrine of man.

The names of Whedon and Miley are the most significant with respect to the consummation of this transitional development within American Methodism (although suggestions of such a tendency are quite evident in the writings of Shinn, Bledsoe, Raymond, and D. C. Kelley). Whedon stands as the most determinative of nineteenth-century American Methodists, simply by reason of the pervasive influence of his unique insistence on Methodism's dialectical opposition to Calvinism; for Whedon it was

<sup>5</sup> The normative connotations for "evangelical" are suggested in *Webster's New International Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam, 1951), p. 883: "Pertaining to . . . that party or school among the Protestants which holds that the essence of the gospel consists mainly in its doctrines of man's sinful condition and need of salvation, the revelation of God's grace in Christ, the necessity of spiritual renovation, and . . . the experience of redemption through faith."



"Freedomism" versus "Necessitarianism." Miley's logical integration of this transitional element in his own systematic theology (founded on a concern for "consistent Arminianism") substantially underscored its significance for American Methodism. (Nor must we overlook the important critique of such transitional tendencies which came from several significant Methodist theologians in nineteenth-century America—notably from Daniel Curry, who succeeded Whedon as editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, and from John Tigert, who became one of Southern Methodism's leading editors.)

While prevailingly conservative, American Methodism's theologians were not unaware of the major developments in critical and scientific (evolutionary) thought which so characterized the latter portion of the nineteenth century. Some, such as W. F. Warren, insisted that Methodism must achieve intellectual relevancy during such a transitional period. Others, such as T. O. Summers, were more concerned to sustain the fundamentals of evangelical orthodoxy. And while most American Methodists shared something of both concerns, the tension between the adaptive and conservative elements approached something of a crisis during the last years of the nineteenth century—a period which saw the emergence of new methodologies and new leadership (Bowne, Terry, Tillett, Curtis, and Sheldon) in the field of systematic theology.

#### EMERGENT CHARACTERISTICS

We now propose to evaluate, somewhat more explicitly, the theology characteristic of American Methodism in the mid-nineteenth century (ca. 1825-85). Certain emergent characteristics will be summarized, not only for their intrinsic importance in the historical unfolding of Wesleyanism, but for their significance as background to Methodism's more recent developments. Following our mention of each emergent characteristic, we shall suggest something of the relationship of this characteristic to our understanding of the Wesleyan theology, and to contemporary developments within American Christianity. Finally, we shall anticipate something of the relevance of these salient characteristics to Methodist theology at the turn of the century (ca. 1885-1915).

*"Gracious ability": a soteriological contribution.* In its emphasis on man's essential freedom as being within the context of redemptive grace—its doctrine of gracious ability—Methodism added something unique to the earlier nineteenth-century American theological milieu. Indeed, the consistency with which the Methodists held (initially, at least) to this

emphasis, and its relevance to varying facets of the American controversies, vindicates the historical significance of this focal point in the Wesleyan-Methodist theology.

What was the effect in the American theological scene of this emphasis on man's essential freedom and moral dignity as being uniquely dependent on the resources of redemptive grace? It provided a popular and evangelical median between the theological extremes of "Old" Calvinism and the moralistic character of the "New" Calvinism. Indeed, it served to accelerate the doctrinal modifications within nineteenth-century American Calvinism, by way of the popular pressure of a concrete evangelical alternative to the extreme positions of Edwardeanism, Hopkinsianism, and even the New Divinity. The most radical doctrinal heterodoxies indigenous to America grew out of Calvinistic dilemmas involving traditional doctrines of sovereignly-distinguishing grace and special providence. The age increasingly insisted on universal benevolence, individual responsibility, moral relationships and individualistic experience. Methodism, with its primary orientation in terms of a doctrine of universally-redemptive grace and general providence, found itself with a somewhat sustained relevancy as the contemporary revision proceeded. (Sporadic Methodist claims that all had come to embrace its Arminian views were, of course, careless exaggeration.)<sup>7</sup>

*Transition in primary theological orientation.* American Methodism, however, did not abide by its own theological heritage. It increasingly traced the uniqueness of its theological position, not to the stress on the universally-personal relevance of redemptive grace, but simply to a stress on the person's intrinsic, absolute freedom of contrary choice! The point of uniqueness in Methodist theology was increasingly specified in terms of its doctrine of the will. No longer was there a stress on the objectively redemptive basis of the character of man's personal freedom; and this loss illustrates concretely the liability to dissolution in the Wesleyan "synthesis" of freedom and grace, a synthesis dependent on a sustained integration of Arminian and Reformed emphases.

What, more specifically, were some of the factors occasioning this most fundamental of all transitions in nineteenth-century American Methodist theology? In a word, it was the outcome of Methodism's attempt to elaborate the uniqueness and systematic relevance of its theological anthropology in the face of a theological context largely influenced by the restricted categories of Edwardean Calvinism. In their search for a strict

<sup>7</sup> For a moderate appraisal of the "leavening" influence of Wesleyan Arminianism within American Christianity, see L. F. Stearns (of Bangor Seminary), "The Influence of Wesleyanism on Calvinism," *Christian Literature*, IV (1891), 42ff.

internal self-consistency, and under the conscious influence of specifically nominalistic philosophical criteria (by way of Reid, Cousin, et al.), such representative theologians as Shinn, Bledsoe, Whedon, and Miley were led into a critique of "ambiguities" in the theological anthropology inherited from the Wesleys. It was thought that the dialectic with Calvinism would be much more effective if grounded, not in any unique doctrine of redemptive grace, but in a unique insistence on that free personal agency considered essential to responsibility.

Perhaps the primary factor in such a transition was the concern to reject completely any implication of the traditionally realistic doctrine of "original guilt" from the Methodist position. However, those dynamic aspects of Wesleyan theology which were involved in the American controversies (grace and freedom, original sin, moral virtue) were not formulated originally in such a way as to endure rigorous logical analysis (conducted in terms of a strictly nominalistic understanding of the categories of being). With respect to the Wesleyan heritage, there was a certain profundity in its comprehension of the respective functions of redemptive grace and personal responsibility within the Christian life. Unresolved ambiguities were accepted consciously as being the position most in accord with the realism of "Scriptural, experimental" religion. Nevertheless, the Wesleyan position also included certain uncritical assumptions and uncriticized inconsistencies with respect to its interpretation of the primal relation of grace to original sin (as it involved the question of original guilt, and as it affected moral freedom). Indeed, in the writings of Wesley himself there is an evident failure to clarify the relation of objective (realistic) and subjective (individualistic) factors in his doctrine of grace and moral responsibility.

The tendency of Wesleyanism toward the pole of subjective voluntarism had always threatened the integral significance, for its theology, of the objectivities of redemptive grace. The nature of the American theological and philosophical context, together with the difficulty in securing historically-oriented, independent theological scholarship from within nineteenth-century American Methodism, contributed to such a tendency away from that objectively redemptive orientation which was so vital to the Wesleyan heritage.

In the field of theological anthropology, Methodism's transitional defense of "freedomism" both partook of and contributed to the general cultural mood of moral optimism, even naturalistic individualism. The ultimate effect of such transitional tendencies was the preparation of Meth-

odism's leading thinkers for the assimilation of certain nonevangelical developments in philosophical theology—including a determinative stress on man's ethical autonomy, a highly nominalistic doctrine of moral responsibility and sin, and a strong emphasis on the theological, even metaphysical significance of individual personality. This proved to be a major aspect of the prolegomena to twentieth-century American Methodism's strong championship of the Ritschlian and Personalistic views of man and the religious life.

Nor was such a fundamental development hidden from Methodist observers. Indeed, the period marking the turn of the century witnessed an increasing spirit of contention within American Methodism regarding the doctrinal tendencies of those in positions of leadership. The primary effect of such intra-Methodist controversy was simply to confirm the divergent parties (traditionalist or revisionist) in the significance of their own position.

*Toward religious moralism in doctrines of the Christian life.* One of the most evident characteristics of nineteenth-century Methodism in America was the gradual decline in emphasis on those Wesleyan doctrines which stressed the personally-related objectives of redemptive grace—viz., the doctrines of radical conversion, the Spirit's witness, the moment of entire sanctification, the eschatological urgency of salvation. This complex transition involved both empirical and theological factors, and served to disclose a basic failure in the Wesleyan-Methodist theology to integrate its emphases on (a) the universally subjective (morally constitutive) effects of grace, and (b) the sporadic crises in the experience of grace. The character, significance, and interpretation of Christian experience, as it affects the Christian life, proved an increasingly problematic matter for Methodism in nineteenth-century America. The late nineteenth-century "Holiness" movement, for instance, was largely a Methodist-originated, sectarian effort to sustain what was conceived to be a crucial Wesleyan emphasis on the grace of entire sanctification. However, the eventual rift within Methodism<sup>8</sup> simply demonstrated the potential tension within the Wesleyan soteriology. Generally, the issues which were raised involved the empirical realism, intellectual adequacy, or Scriptural authenticity of traditional soteriological expressions.

Tendencies to both moralism and emotionalism were intensified in the American context, though it was the moralistic temper which prevailed increasingly over the main body of American Methodists. Methodism's

<sup>8</sup> This development is treated very thoroughly in John Peters, "The Wesleyan Doctrine of Perfection in America in the Nineteenth Century," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1949. (A revision of this dissertation is to be published by The Abingdon Press.)

inherent concern for practical holiness gained ascendance as a prime determinant, increasingly dissociated from that orientation in redemptive grace which had been integral to Wesleyanism. Although in itself somewhat debtor to the moralistic pragmatism of the nineteenth-century American context, Methodism in its own turn served to sustain and enhance this same religious moralism.

*Uncertainty in religious authority.* Actually, American Methodism in the nineteenth century was never able to clarify the respective authority of Scripture, reason, and evangelical experience in its theological formulations. For a great part of the time it remained unaware of the problems or possibilities in this theological area, remaining largely dependent on traditional biblical apologetics. In practice, there emerged a fairly clear doctrine of pragmatically-qualified biblical authority (viz., an insistence on close biblical adherence in teaching, but with a pragmatic check against any scholastic appeal to absolute biblical authority). Although this was a suggestive practical compromise (and one which was essentially Wesleyan), there were problems associated with such a rapprochement on religious authority. While professing allegiance to the objective primacy of Scripture, Methodism's theology often was controlled by subtle emotional and intellectual stereotypes which were intrinsic to the Methodist community.

On the one hand, such an indefinite position (with respect to Scriptural authority) proved a negative influence in Methodism and among certain other denominations whose methodological attitudes were affected by Methodist practice. The effect in many cases was a superficial biblicism which resisted any critical, historical, or "contemporary" study of the Bible. One of the most evident characteristics of Methodist theologians during this period was an inadequately documented resistance to emergent developments as constituting an abandonment of the proper norms of biblical theism. On the other hand, Methodism's methodological potpourri of Scriptural, moralistic, and empirical stereotypes actually rendered it susceptible to such revisionist views as (for instance) came to characterize the Ritschlian school. Indeed, as American Methodism entered the twentieth century some of its leading theologians gave evidence of the deep influence of the Ritschlian spirit, with its apprehension of speculative theology and its emphases on the importance of practical, moral, evangelical, and "biblical" theology.

*Conservative adaptability in theological method.* American Methodism, along with the rest of evangelical Protestantism, did retreat from doctrinal and methodological traditionalism in the nineteenth century. But

its retreat was somewhat unique. In the face of contextual demands for a scientific reconstruction of thought, Methodism proved somewhat receptive to those methodological revisions which did not trespass radically on evangelical essentials. Its response was one of conservative adaptability, qualified pragmatically by a sustained evangelicalism.

The key to such a moderate approach, of course, lay in the Wesleyan insistence on a pragmatically evangelical and experiential orientation for any biblical or theological exposition. In spite of its preoccupation with systematic apologetics, Methodism generally retained such a methodological principle. (Indeed, its position had some leavening influence within American Protestantism, encouraging the biblically conservative at least to consider the studies of more revisionist scholars.) For Methodism itself such a position meant an avoidance of much of the disruptive anti-revision controversies which embroiled certain other evangelical Protestant denominations.<sup>9</sup> Even when Fundamentalism emerged as an organized movement, the element of direct Methodist participation was relatively small. Actually, Methodism became one of the important "conciliators" between emergent twentieth-century categories and concerns which ultimately were evangelical.

It is also true that this same broad methodology rendered Methodism increasingly liable to the appropriation of certain latitudinarian tendencies not only in method but in doctrine. This susceptibility became quite evident as Methodism entered the twentieth century. Indeed, as the attention within Protestantism shifted from soteriological to methodological concerns, so Methodism (from a basically "liberal evangelicalism")<sup>10</sup> gradually moved toward a more philosophically-oriented "evangelical liberalism." It was Methodism, as much as any other single Protestant group, which sustained the characteristic features of such an evangelical liberalism throughout the first part of the twentieth century.

It is important that we add this observation: Those elements of transition or continuity which characterized American Methodism's relations to its Wesleyan heritage were to be found in the theological mind of both Northern and Southern Methodism. Radical, adaptive, conservative, and ultra-traditional tendencies were to be found on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line (though the adaptive tendencies were more prevalent within the leadership of the Methodist Episcopal Church). Here are some sug-

<sup>9</sup> For an instance of Methodism's median position, see F. J. McConnell's *Edward Gayer Andrews*, New York: Eaton & Mains, 1909, pp. 150ff.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Whedon's reference to Methodism as "a liberal evangelical theology," in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, LXV (April, 1883), 371ff.



gestions as to factors behind this absence of any North-South *doctrinal* schism: Methodism's traditional focus on the Christian life rather than on creedal orthodoxy (thus reducing potential grounds for contention); an evangelical "catholicity" inherited from Wesleyanism; the system of connectionalism with its interchange of pastors (contributing to the absence of narrow traditionalism or sectionalism); the appeal to common theological sources, such as Wesley, Fletcher, Watson, and Pope; personal acquaintances and influence across "sections" on the part of such indigenous leaders as Fisk, Olin, McClintock, Ralston, Raymond, Summers, Whedon, Foster, Miley, Tillett, Warren, and Tigert; and the presence of contextual occasions for a common polemic (e.g. Calvinism, rationalism, etc.), sustaining a mutual concern for the personal relevance of evangelical reality.

#### THE UNITY IN METHODIST THEOLOGY

In spite of certain transitions in theological emphasis, Methodist theology in America in the nineteenth century sustained at least a formal allegiance to the evangelical outlines of Wesleyanism. Indeed, by way of its traditional concern for the practical and experiential application of evangelical doctrines, and because of its omnipresence throughout American culture, Methodism helped to sustain and deepen the evangelically-pragmatic character of American Christianity.

Our discussion thus far has endeavored to lift up certain residual characteristics which seemed evident throughout past epochs of Methodist theological activity. Is it possible to discern a unitive emphasis which lends *meaning* to this particular "band" of thought in the spectrum of Christian theology? On the basis of our study of almost two centuries of Wesleyan-Methodist thought (British, then American), it has become clear that there is a degree of dynamic continuity which serves to distinguish the content and method of "Methodist theology."

Quite explicitly, the unity and historical integrity of Methodist theology lie in a continuing concern for the *personal relevance of universal redemption!* Personal responsibility is understood in terms of the prevenient relevance of the Atonement (in graciously restoring moral capacities to fallen man). Inherent in such a normative emphasis are two components which motivate and limit the Wesleyan Methodist position in given moral or religious situations. These integral, selective principles are the concern for *individuality* and the concern for *evangelicalism* (see note 6).

In the first place, Methodist theology always has sustained a deep sense of the eternal significance of the individual's experience. This *individu-*

*ality*—ultimate, moral, empirical—lends meaning to the following characteristics of Methodist theology: the urgent appeal to individual men for repentance and faith; the antagonism to theological and philosophical determinisms; the authority of Christian experience, in conviction, conversion, and entire sanctification; the respect for personal testimony, for the call to the ministry, for lay Christianity; the pragmatic critique of theological systems. This same deep adherence to the principle of individuality helps us to understand Methodism's susceptibility to: nominalistic theological and philosophical criteria; a somewhat Pelagian doctrine of moral agency; emotional individualism, and otherworldliness; and certain humanistic and/or romanticistic urges and emphases.

But it is evident that there is one other essential component in that underlying unitive focus which directs and limits Methodist theology, and that is its *evangelicalism*. The respect for the individual includes the recognition of his need for that salvation which is available only in Christ. Grace is primary for life and thought. Salvation, available to all men, is urgent and indispensable. It is on the basis of this persistent concern that we can understand something of the following characteristics of Methodist theology: the Christocentric nature of its doctrine of God, of saving grace, and of the Christian life; its sacramental (graciously-oriented) doctrine of existence and nature; its insistence on a theological framework which makes place (at least) for the essentials of evangelical orthodoxy, thus Methodism's nonsusceptibility to extreme romanticism or transcendentalism (in spite of its emphatic concern for individuality); the willingness to appeal to a common heritage of evangelical literature; its resistance to any philosophical or theological system which cannot at least be rendered compatible with the essentials of the Evangel—i.e. man's need of God's salvation through Christ; the primacy of the mood of evangelism and missionary outreach.

Methodist theology, normatively, must be oriented in terms of this twofold concern for individuality and evangelicalism. The principle of individuality is balanced by the allegiance to evangelicalism—the underlying unity coming in the concern for the personal relevance of universal redemption. But the question of dominant emphasis, in the case of the two components, is always somewhat unsettled—depending usually upon which concern seems most neglected among Methodism's religious contemporaries. The unitive element in Methodism is much more functional than it is dogmatic. This helps us to understand both the element of transitional adaptation and that degree of evangelical continuity which so characterize Wesleyan Methodism's theological history.

# Rest for Your Souls

WALTER LOWRIE

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matt. 11:28, 29)*

I WONDER IF MANY are so "slow of heart to believe" as I have been, that in these words Jesus prescribes a sovereign cure for the restlessness of mind which in all ages has been the principal affliction of mankind—and perhaps never so deeply and so commonly as in our time, when physicians, psychiatrists, and philosophers vie with one another in proposing remedies for a disorder which works havoc with our lives and may even lead to madness. This has long been a favorite text of mine, because it discloses more clearly than any other the attitude Jesus required of his disciples, and therefore describes in terms of Christian character what Christianity essentially is. But why was I so slow to perceive that Jesus offers *immediate* rest to our souls?

Perhaps because I dwelt too exclusively upon the heavenly hope, the eschatological reference of the gospel, forgetting that "godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6) and that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is (as well as) that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). I cannot count it impossible that so thorough an eschatologist as St. Paul might have written these words. The words reported by St. John (16:33), "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," certainly look forward to the final event, "the one, far-off divine event towards which the whole creation moves;" but in view of that, the promise of "good cheer" is available now, immediately.

All of Jesus' compassionate works of healing were for this present life, the demons were driven out *now*, and among them the demon of restlessness. The saying, "I will, be thou *whole*," which describes Jesus'

---

WALTER LOWRIE, M.A., D.D., S.T.D., is a retired Episcopal minister and scholar living now at Princeton, New Jersey, the author of many books and a translation of Kierkegaard. He gives us an expository article on a text insufficiently appreciated in some theological quarters today.

purpose in healing bodily ailments, is even more obviously appropriate to the miracle of making whole a divided heart, which is the cause of all our restlessness. "Purity of heart," says Kierkegaard, "is to will one thing"—and that is impossible with a divided heart. Thus, too, Jesus promises us compassionately rest *now* for our tormented souls, though it is rest eternal. "Our hearts are restless," said St. Augustine, "till they rest in Thee."

In my early ministry I derived a great part of my erudition from reading the Herzog-Hauck *Realencyklopädie*, the great German encyclopedia "for Theology and Church," the twenty-one volumes of which were issued to subscribers in sections of sixty-four pages every little while, from 1896 to 1909. (In my school days I had read a great part of Chamber's Encyclopedia, which had the advantage that the articles were short and did not tempt a boy to neglect his studies as would a long continued story. In my boarding school every pupil was required to have an unabridged Webster's Dictionary and to read several pages of it every day. In this there was no temptation to neglect other studies.) Though the interest of the religious encyclopedia was not too absorbing, I waited with eagerness each new installment, and never was my expectation more richly rewarded than by Wilhelm Herrmann's article on *Demut* (meekness) in the fourth volume.

From that moment I became an enthusiastic disciple of Herrmann. Even now when I am no longer a "Liberal," I am not ashamed of my enthusiasm for him; he is the one exponent of German theological liberalism whom I am proud to acknowledge as my teacher. In 1904 I exploited this article of Herrmann's in *Gaudium Crucis* (pp. 77 ff.), and again more fully in *The Church and Its Organization* (pp. 158 ff.); but since both these books are out of print, I repeat here the gist of his exposition of a passage which reveals more clearly than any other the character which Jesus wished to impress upon his disciples.

Although the first disciples of Jesus doubtless understood very well what he meant, there are several words which need to be explained to our generation. The word "meekness" in particular has acquired a meaning very remote from the sense in which Jesus used it. The Latin *humilitas* was in the first instance an exact rendering of the Greek word for meekness; but it was not used in Jesus' sense when it was employed to express the religious lowliness a man must feel in the presence of God his Creator, and still less when it came to mean the outcome of the pious discipline of self-examination, the virtue of *humilitas* as defined by St. Bernard: "through a true knowledge of oneself to despise oneself." This is the notion of meek-

ness which still prevails in our day. Hence meekness is distasteful because it is a virtue excogitated by thinking about oneself (which Jesus never recommended), and therefore may be fictitious, simulated, hypocritical, like the mealy mouthed humility of Uriah Heep. Nothing could be further from the thought of Jesus. Instead of exhorting his disciples to think about themselves and to "know themselves" in the Socratic way, he encouraged them, *by his example*, to give up all concern about themselves, and instead of that to assume pragmatically the position and the attitude of servants.

The fact that Jesus exhorted his disciples to learn this attitude from him ought to have made it impossible to misunderstand the word "meekness." This cannot be an unlovely or a hypocritical attitude if it was the attitude of Jesus. Meekness was the one human trait of Jesus which St. Paul records: "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:1), and he rightly defined it as "taking the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7)—by which it appears that he considered this rather a divine trait than a human. It is notorious that Jesus did not think meanly of himself. The words which immediately precede his exhortation to the disciples to learn meekness of him are the proudest words a man has ever uttered: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father . . ." (Matt. 11:27).

The quality of meekness which Jesus sought to impress upon his disciples was love of a new kind, which never before had been recommended by a religious teacher. But, as St. John (1 John 2:7-11) said of the "new commandment" which in a way was also the "old commandment" of love, the ideal of meekness also had its roots in the Old Testament. For that reason it was the more persuasive and could more easily be understood. One can hardly fail to notice the religious use of the word "poor" in Isaiah and in the Psalms. The Hebrew word for the poor (*anavim*) is translated in the Septuagint and in the New Testament by *tōchos* and *praus*, which we render in English by "the poor" and "the meek." It was the experience of Israel that the poor, because they were helpless, were more ready than others to trust in the Lord and to obey him. Hence the word "poor" acquired a meaning over and above the notion of indigence: it denoted persons who were trustful and obedient, perhaps even in spite of wealth and lofty station.

Jesus carried further the development of this meaning and prescribed to his disciples the spirit of meekness, having adopted as his own program Isaiah's description of the meek and suffering servant of the Lord (Matt.

12:18-20). He expected John the Baptist to recognize him in this role when he said, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and *the poor have good news preached to them*" (Matt. 11:4-6, R.S.V.). His beatitudes were addressed to "the poor," and it is likely that was precisely the word he used (Luke 6:20); but Matthew rightly understood what it meant when he wrote "the poor in spirit" (Matt. 3:5), and Jesus himself sanctioned this interpretation when he said in our text, "For I am meek and *lowly in heart*."

Up to this point Herrmann expounds this text admirably. But, being a disciple of Albrecht Ritschl and therefore too astute to rise to the fancy flies of eschatology, the delusions of a heavenly hope, he accounted this a very hard saying, involving a fictitious dilemma which only by a prodigious effort could be resolved. The difficulty he envisages is that "the highest ethical ideal is self-realization, and this is an ideal which the Christian of all men is least able to ignore, since he seeks in Jesus the Saviour of his life and hears from him the promise that he shall be blessed—yet from the same mouth he receives the commandment of self-renunciation." Hear how he labors with this problem: "When Jesus' might over us creates the willingness to serve and the power to serve, then we have attained that which by no counsel of self-interested prudence, and by no concern about ourselves and all that we discover within ourselves, is ever attainable."

That is nobly said. But surely it would be simpler to say that the Christian who has heard from Jesus the promise of *eternal* blessedness can cheerfully put up with a little hardship *now*, and that by this promise he is henceforth exempted from self-concern, from the postulated ethical ideal of self-realization or self-aggrandizement, "knowing that God in his good will is working within us to will and to achieve our salvation" (Phil. 2:13). The Christian who is thus instructed will hail as glad tidings Jesus' announcement that "he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12), and will not be disposed to resent St. Paul's exhortation, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"—even though it involves "counting others better than yourself" in the sense of having an eye to their interests rather than to your own (Phil. 2:2-5). In our Liturgy we hail as "comfortable words" the saying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

Although Christians may be slow to recognize that meekness was the quality Jesus wished to impress upon Christianity as its most distinguish



able mark, the opponents of Christianity have perceived this unerringly. Christians, in fact, are naturally disinclined to see anything in their religion which is distasteful to the "natural man," as is everything which runs counter to egoistic self-realization; for to see it is to be committed to it. Friedrich Nietzsche, who called himself Antichrist, had no such inhibition; he perceived clearly that meekness was the distinguishing quality of Christianity, and he rightly understood it as a disposition to serve. This disposition he abhorred, stigmatizing it as slave morality (*Sklavenmoral*), in contrast with *Herrenmoral*, the disposition to lord it over others, to be a master of men in the ruthless pursuit of self-realization and self-aggrandizement.

Often the recollection of his early piety prompted him to exempt Jesus from the criticisms he leveled against Christianity; but in this instance he could not spare him, for in this respect his declaration that "Christ was the only Christian" was almost true. Nietzsche, who was more under the influence of Darwin than he liked to confess, appealed triumphantly to the biological law, "the survival of the fittest" through "natural selection" in the cruel contest for mastery by which all species, including man, had attained their present development. Nature, red in tooth and claw, with ravin shrieks against the creed of meekness. To Nietzsche it seemed plausible to suppose that the rule of meekness would mean retrogression, that it would reduce mankind to a proletarian mass and preclude the advent of the superman. "Man," he cried, "is something that must be surpassed!" But essentially this is what Jesus said!

So here, evidently, there was a misunderstanding of Jesus. The beatitudes of Jesus were very far from being a proletarian manifesto, they were not an incitement to slave revolt, and it is notorious that Jesus refused to put himself at the head of the masses, even in opposition to the tyranny of Rome. Jesus spoke to individuals, and his principal disciples were individually selected and became servants by a glad and free choice, one might almost say because they recognized this as a superior calling. Therefore "slave morality" does not rightly describe the meekness and lowliness of heart which Jesus exemplified and enjoined. Perhaps Jesus perceived that mankind had already reached the highest perfection the species could attain by the way of biological development, and that now a totally different law of life was needed. Lord Tennyson, the poet of evolution, called for a reversal of the old law when he cried, "Strive upward, working out the beast, and let the ape and tiger die."

In fact, Nietzsche was no less of an eschatologist than Jesus. He

looked forward to the superman as a distant hope, and he set his heart upon the fantastic notion of "eternal recurrence," which was his substitute for the kingdom of God. Jesus, too, contemplated the production of supermen, and not in a time indefinitely remote. He thought of them as the children of God! In his own day he was impressed by the prodigious figure of John the Baptist, of whom he affirmed that "among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater"—but he added prophetically, "notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:11). Jesus promised rest eternal, but his disciples did not have to wait for eternity to find rest for their souls, it was offered to them now. The "shall find" does not point to a remote future, it is a future immediately consecutive to assuming his yoke, for he said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Alas, Friedrich Nietzsche found no present comfort, no surcease of sorrow, no rest for his agonized soul, in his creed of the superman and in the prospect of eternal recurrence. The cruelty of *Herrenmoral*, which was in strident conflict with his sensitive and gentle nature, exasperated his sufferings to the verge of insanity, and finally beyond that verge. No one in his generation was more desperately in need of the cure for restlessness of soul which Jesus so compassionately and so persuasively offered. The present-day atheistic existentialists who appeal to him as *fons et origo* of their doctrine (with far better reason than they appeal to Kierkegaard) are the exponents of unmitigated despair, or demoniac despair, because they exclude the possibility of love in all its higher manifestations from *agape* to meekness. If Jesus' exhortation to learn meekness from him were not in itself persuasive enough, this either/or might be conclusive. Essentially the alternative is hate or love. The example of Nietzsche and of the atheistic existentialists is plainly deterrent. Jesus did not hesitate to express this either/or in the most paradoxical form: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39).

# Gamaliel Bradford's Use of Words

LOWELL M. ATKINSON

## I

THERE IS SOMETIMES something forlorn about the lone spectator who can only watch while his fellows enjoy the throb of action. Gamaliel Bradford was destined to be a perpetual spectator of the busy game of life. He suffered from a tubercular condition as a young man and was forced to leave Harvard shortly after his matriculation. Despite a trip abroad, his condition did not improve, and he had to adjust himself to the fact that he would never be a well man.

Gamaliel Bradford was born into a family of Boston blue-bloods in 1863, died in 1932. He was of the stock of Governor William Bradford of the Plymouth Colony. It was that Governor Bradford who, after the first terrible winter in the New World, during which a half of the people in the colony died from cold, illness, and hunger, could still face the future with unconquerable resolve and say to his people, "It is not with us as with men whom small things discourage." One would hardly call Gamaliel Bradford a Puritan, unless the word be used in the gregarious manner which led Stuart P. Sherman to say, "All Americans are Puritans." But something of Puritan grit is in evidence. He says practically nothing about his semi-invalid condition, and actually maintains a sweetness of spirit which gives his essays a singular beauty. Even his cynicism is sweetly sad rather than bitter. The gentle cynicism which pervades his pages is not a by-product of self-pity.

Only in the revealing pages of his *Journal* does Bradford speak of "the swoop of the hawk," as he aptly describes the terrible vertigo that came upon him recurrently. Here is a typical entry: "Work away on Sarah Butler in the morning, though all the time in considerable fear of toppling over onto the floor . . ." <sup>1</sup> It is no idle word. So fierce were the attacks that he would fall prone on the bed with the dismaying sensation of utter

---

<sup>1</sup> Bradford, G., *Journal*, edited by Van Wyck Brooks. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933, p. 355.

---

LOWELL M. ATKINSON, B.D., Ph.D., is Minister of the First Methodist Church, Englewood, New Jersey. In this essay he illustrates the manner in which criticism of literature can become criticism of life; literary criticism too can be a form of evangelism.

helplessness while bed, room and all seemed to revolve dizzily. He was always glad to hear the ticking of the clock, for good hearing promised relief from vertigo. What it cost him to rise from his bed after one of these attacks and walk to his desk to continue work, we can only surmise.

At the age of nineteen, Bradford adopted letters as a profession. Despite his love of languages and literature, and his ability to write, Bradford did not find his true metier until he was fifty years of age. Like Dr. Paul Elmer More, he nourished ambitions to write poetry, drama, and novels. Like Dr. More, again, he found his true medium of expression in the essay. It was *Lee the American*, a book-length biography of Robert E. Lee, published in 1912, that marked the beginning of the work for which Bradford is famous. The fact that a Boston Yankee could even be interested in a Rebel leader to the extent of writing his biography is unique. But that this work is not only fair but even a labor of love, reveals the quality of understanding which is Bradford's genius. This book marked the beginning of twenty years of "psychographs." In every case there were certain clues to character that Bradford sought out—love, family relations, pride, ambition, religion, use of money, and the like. The amount of labor that this insulated author performed is astounding. As Marston Balch says, "He had a sickly man's will to achieve,"<sup>2</sup> and he was willing to pay the price of achievement in hard work. In preparing his excellent study of Mark Twain, for instance, he read the forty-four volumes of Twain's writings and all available biographical material.<sup>3</sup>

What does Bradford say about his work? He has given us his thoughts about the portrayal of souls very explicitly in three essays, namely, "Psychography," in *A Naturalist of Souls*, "Confessions of a Biographer" in *Wives*, and "Biography and the Human Heart" in the volume of the same name. Perhaps we may also mention the discussion of method in the appendix to his first biography, *Lee the American*. In a sense this is more satisfying to the critical humanist than statements in his later works. He speaks of the difficulty of understanding people. Why, then, persist in the attempt? Bradford replies, "First, because, largely on account of this very difficulty, it is the most fascinating of human pursuits. The naturalist spends long days or months of patient toil in observing the habits of a bird or insect. Is not the human soul of more value than many insects?"<sup>4</sup> Bradford generally felt that the human soul *was* of more value

<sup>2</sup> Balch, M., ed. *Modern Short Biographies*, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1935, p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> O'Neill, Edward, *A History of American Biography*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935, p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> Bradford, G., *Lee the American*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912, p. 269.

than many insects, although he never learned why. The title essay in *Biography and the Human Heart* is revealing. "We live and move in a world of shadows, in which there is one intense reality, the reality called you or I, which perhaps is the vaguest shadow of all."<sup>5</sup> Here is the secret of Bradford's loneliness. It is the familiar romantic malady of egocentricism. To feel intensely that you are, is to feel intensely that other persons are not you; that is, they are outside you. A sensitive soul, brooding upon the reality of his own life, and denied the easy intercourse with men which breaks our insulation, will suffer all the loneliness of the lad who cannot play the game with the other boys.

Bradford is clear enough about his method of soul portrayal. "The biographer must not overwhelm us with formless, irrelevant, inconsequent gossip. He must know how to go right straight at the pregnant touch which reveals, to pick that out, to stress it, without overstressing it, and to leave entirely aside the mass of the insignificant, which merely confuses and obscures."<sup>6</sup> In the essay, "Psychography," he uses the very language of humanism: "Out of the perpetual flux of actions and circumstances that constitute a man's whole life, it seeks to extract what is essential, what is permanent and so vitally characteristic."<sup>7</sup> In his *Journal* he says, "I cannot help thinking that a good deal of my strength lies in just this very selection of quotations."<sup>8</sup> Again in "The Confessions of a Biographer" he tells us, "The biographer must select, weigh, discard."<sup>9</sup> It is clear enough that Bradford knows his own mind. But his business is to know the minds of others. How does he succeed in this regard?

"It is no easy matter to combine veracity and vivacity,"<sup>10</sup> he once said. Yet he does it. He enjoyed psychography as one enjoys a good game. "The fun of turning from General Lee, for instance, to Whistler, of closely, carefully creeping into the souls of each of them, groping in strange corners, spying out hidden secrets, throwing sudden searchlights on little matters that would surprise the parties themselves as much as they do you."<sup>11</sup> His words constantly have the sparkle of life, even when his thoughts have the sadness of death. His style is easy, his words vivid, only rarely turgid, and frequently epigrammatic. He says of General Stuart, "His gayety, his laughter, were infectious, and turned a raid into a revel."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Bradford, G., *Biography and the Human Heart*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1932, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Bradford, G., *A Naturalist of Souls*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1926, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> *Journal*, p. 202.

<sup>9</sup> Bradford, G., *Wives*, Harper & Brothers, 1925, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Journal*, p. 180.

<sup>12</sup> Bradford, G., *Confederate Portraits*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912, p. 47.

He describes the strange childlikeness of Aaron Burr and his daughter, Theodosia. "The world, to both of them, was instinctively a matter of pretty things . . . Burr manged to give to even vast designs a perpetual flavor of comic opera . . . Love, hate, empire, life, were toys to be trifled with and flung away, in view of the vast ocean of illusion, which tosses up men and gods and worlds and hopes in a ceaseless admired disorder forever and forever."<sup>13</sup>

There was for Bradford a delicious sense of power in the intimate understanding of the souls of men, not always free from the taint of sadism. "For the time I am so almost terribly near to them, work my way so closely, so intimately, so cruelly into their souls."<sup>14</sup> "Cruelly"—there is a word to ponder!

## II

Bradford is at his best when giving the inevitable word or sentence that finally reveals a soul. After discussing General Joseph E. Johnston's bad fortune, Bradford comments, "A large element in Johnston's ill-luck was just simply Joseph E. Johnston."<sup>15</sup> He describes Judah P. Benjamin as "a man placed in a position too large for him . . . he rattles about in it."<sup>16</sup> He describes the energetic nature of Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke College, by quoting her motto, "Live for God and do something."<sup>17</sup> Of Emily Dickinson he writes, "She was a sister of Lamb. She was also a sister of those most delicate creatures of the whole world's imagination, the clowns of Shakespeare."<sup>18</sup> There is a wealth of understanding in such an expression as this: "Men do not realize that they shake off the burden of life when they enter their own doors. A woman takes it up."<sup>19</sup> He compares Dwight L. Moody and Frances Willard. "To her, temperance was religion, or at least it was the phase of religion in which she was wrapped up. To Moody the Christian religion was far more than even temperance."<sup>20</sup>

We are told a great deal about the son of Whistler's Mother when we read, "The problem with Whistler is to reconcile a great artist with a little man."<sup>21</sup> Theodore Roosevelt is summed up as a man who "killed

<sup>13</sup> *Wives*, p. 124.

<sup>14</sup> *Journal*, p. 302.

<sup>15</sup> *Confederate Portraits*, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>17</sup> Bradford, G., *Portraits of American Women*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933, qu. p. 90.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Bradford, G., *D. L. Moody*, George H. Doran Co., 1927, p. 218.

<sup>21</sup> Bradford, G., *American Portraits*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922, p. 218.



mosquitoes as if they were lions, and lions as if they were mosquitoes."<sup>22</sup> In the same volume there are some trenchant words about Woodrow Wilson. Bradford quotes Wilson's words, "I would rather fail in a cause that I knew some day will triumph than win in a cause that I knew some day will fail." There follows Bradford's comment, "Yet even here how eminently characteristic 'I knew.' He knew, he knew, he always knew, for he was a creature of brains."<sup>23</sup> Dean Hough quotes this passage and remarks, "How skillfully Bradford can sting."<sup>24</sup> There are times when the invalid of Wellesley Hills reminds us of that eighteenth-century invalid who came to be known as the Wasp of Twickenham.

Bradford's criticisms of Mark Twain and Henry Adams represent his best manner. He suggests that Mark Twain is not our best humorist, for the simple reason that he is not a humorist at all. "His writing alternates from the violence of unmeaning laughter to the harshness of satire that has no laughter in it." The popular idea that a man who destroys sham is to be revered even though he does not believe in reverence is justly judged by Bradford. "If Mark made the world better, he also made it worse; at any rate, many individuals in it. For with the wholesale destruction of shams, went, as so often, the destruction of reverence, 'that angel of the world,' as Shakespeare calls it."<sup>25</sup>

The criticism of Henry Adams is penetrating. Bradford discerns quickly the lack of seriousness, even sincerity, in Adam's quest for education. "He proclaims that his life is spent in an effort to seek education; but one cannot escape feeling that he is not very eager to find it. He bewails the overwhelming burden of ignorance that descends upon him, appears to bewail it; but one cannot help feeling that his grief is largely rhetorical and that, so long as ignorance enables him to gild a phrase or turn an epigram, he can forgive it."<sup>26</sup> Bradford shrewdly suggests that Adams "needed not to think but to live . . . It was easier to sit back and proclaim life unworthy of Henry Adams than it was to lean forward with the whole soul in a passionate, if inadequate effort to make Henry Adams worthy of life."<sup>27</sup>

Gilbert Chesterton once described man as "a beast whose superiority to other beasts consists in having fallen."<sup>28</sup> This strangely unique ca-

<sup>22</sup> Bradford, G., *The Quick and the Dead*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931, p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>24</sup> Hough, L. H., *Vital Control*, Abingdon Press, 1934, p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> *American Portraits*, p. 24.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>28</sup> Chesterton, G. K., *The Ball and the Cross*, New York: J. Lane Co., 1909, p. 11.

capacity for tumbling downwards is indeed the crowning glory of men. For it is also a capacity for stumbling upwards. And frequently, as the Greek epigram has it, we ascend downwards. It is of interest to know how much recognition an author gives to this strange power which can lift man a little lower than the angels, or lower man a little beneath the animals. Bradford is perfectly aware of the reality which Irving Babbitt described as "vital control," perhaps because his own life included so much of effort and struggle.

Bradford always emphasizes the factor of human control in history. "To understand the great movements of history, you cannot have a richer clue than personalities as they intertwine with each other to make events."<sup>29</sup> "Personalities making events"—there is the humanistic note. He understands the beauty of the ordered life. Commenting on Robert E. Lee, he writes, "Lee dominated his passions and secured the high temperance and triumphant control which were among his most marked characteristics. His temperance, however, was no less a spiritual grace than a moral victory."<sup>30</sup> A similar statement is made concerning Longfellow's character. "From the nature of his life the spiritual effort more often took the form of control, and it is evident that his outward serenity was in many cases the consequences of victory in a tempestuous inner struggle."<sup>31</sup> A great sentence in *Saints and Sinners* satirizes vitality without control. He is discussing Caesar Borgia.

When the joyous youth of today proclaims the sacred right to indulge its instincts without trammel or restraint, it is just as well to turn back to the Italy of the fifteenth century, through which rides and revels the mysterious, dominating, superbly self-asserting figure of the Duke of Valentinois, who gratified his passions without scruple, bullied his father, murdered his relatives, outraged man, and defied God, thus affording a delightful example of the inherent privilege of self-expression and the free development of spontaneous individual instincts in the glad and golden days of the Renaissance.<sup>32</sup>

Bradford is able to distinguish that which is human from that which is merely humanitarian; that is, he can separate sense and sentimentality. For instance, there is the matter of humanitarian reform. Bradford quotes Moody, "I have heard of reform, reform, until I am tired and sick of the whole thing. It is the regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost that we need." Bradford promptly finds a corroborating proof-text in his well-thumbed gospel according to Sainte-Beuve, which mentions "the

<sup>29</sup> Bradford, G., *A Naturalist of Souls*, p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> Bradford, G., *Lee the American*, p. 227.

<sup>31</sup> Bradford, G., *Biography and the Human Heart*, p. 54.

<sup>32</sup> Bradford, G., *Saints and Sinners*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912, p. 37.

invasion of philanthropy side by side with industrialism, which has secularized charity more and more and reduced it to material well-being for others and for oneself: which is not even the shadow of spiritual charity in the Christian sense."<sup>33</sup> Equally important is Bradford's comment on Alexander Stephen's almost Hindu regard for the sacredness of animal life.

Perhaps it is possible to overdo this matter of sympathy with animals. It seems to some of us that the universal pity of the nineteenth century rather tended to increase the aggregate of sentient woe than to diminish it. When Uncle Toby spares the pestilent fly, we love him for it, especially as he is not aware of the huge maleficence with which later investigation was to load that domestic parasite. But when Stephen mourns over the necessary destruction of prison bedbugs, he seems to push altruism to the edge of the ludicrous—and over.<sup>34</sup>

To this the humanist can only say, "Quite!"

### III

The saddest passage in Bradford's writings speaks of a letter he received from a friend recently converted to Christ. The friend writes, "I have always felt that the Lord has a great work for you, and you yourself have said that you would be a preacher if you only had a message. You are going to have one. I know it." Bradford says, "Alas, the message never came."<sup>35</sup> How sincere is the "alas"? The tragedy is not so much that Bradford was not a Christian preacher, but that he was not a Christian. His house was built at the cost of enormous labor, and was not lacking in dignity and beauty. But it was built upon the sand. Bradford knew it, and a pagan sadness pervades his pages. He believed in man, but for the wrong reasons. He loved men, but he is not a humanist. He concerned himself with personality, except that he never understood it. Loneliness, a gentle cynicism, spiritual irony—these are the things we remember about Gamaliel Bradford. And we ask, "Why?"

The answer is that he was afraid of *words*. Or if it seems too obviously ridiculous to say that a man who lived with words was afraid of them, we might retrench sufficiently to say that Bradford was afraid of at least one word. It is not a large word. But it is the only word that matters. That word is "God." There is a relevant passage in Chesterton's book, *The Ball and the Cross*, in which a Christian and a pacifist are involved in a discussion.

<sup>33</sup> Bradford, G., *D. L. Moody*, George H. Doran Co., 1927, quotations, p. 221.

<sup>34</sup> Bradford, G., *Confederate Portraits*, p. 169.

<sup>35</sup> *D. L. Moody*, p. 46.

"Is not bloodshed a great sin?"

"No," said MacLan, speaking for the first time.

"Well, really, really!" said the peacemaker.

"Murder is a sin," said the immovable Highlander. "There is no sin of bloodshed."

"Well, we won't quarrel about a word," said the other, pleasantly.

"Why on earth not?" said MacLan, with a sudden asperity. "Why shouldn't we quarrel about a word? What is the good of words if they aren't important enough to quarrel over? Why do we chose one word more than another if there isn't any difference between them? If you call a woman a chimpanzee instead of an angel, wouldn't there be a quarrel about a word? If you're not going to argue about words, what are you going to argue about? Are you going to convey your meaning to me by moving your ears? The Church and the heresies always used to fight about words, because they are the only things worth fighting about. I say that murder is a sin, and bloodshed is not, and that there is as much difference between those words as there is between the word 'yes' and the word 'no'; or rather more difference, for 'yes' and 'no' at least belong to the same category. Murder is a spiritual incident. Bloodshed is a physical incident. A surgeon commits bloodshed."<sup>36</sup>

Or we recall the curious reluctance of Faust to give God a name.

Call it Bliss! Heart! Love! God!  
I have no name to give it!  
Feeling is all in all:  
The Name is sound and smoke,  
Obscuring Heaven's clear glow.<sup>37</sup>

Margaret is afraid there is some hitch in it. There is. And because Faust refuses to define God, there is set in motion a tragic train of events, the seduction of Margaret, her murder of her mother, the death of her baby, and the devilish slaying of her brother.

And yet—"It makes no difference," says Bradford, "how you define God."<sup>38</sup> The truth is that nothing really makes any difference except how you define God. Bradford elsewhere maintains that Whitman, because he "avoids all definitions, all dogmas, is only the better poet and the wiser worshipper."<sup>39</sup> The fact that Walt Whitman's God bears a curious resemblance to Walt Whitman does not bother Bradford. In this same volume, we have this extraordinary comment on Charlotte Cushman: "As to actual belief in God, Miss Cushman constantly affirms it, not perhaps with any precise metaphysical definition, but with the glow of emotion which goes further than any metaphysics." This is illustrated by the interesting quotation from Miss Cushman, "Every human being who goes

<sup>36</sup> Chesterton, G. K., *The Ball and the Cross*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>37</sup> Goethe, *Faust*, tr. Bayard Taylor, Modern Library, Book 1, Scene 16.

<sup>38</sup> D. L. Moody, p. 303.

<sup>39</sup> *Biography and the Human Heart*, p. 93.

to sleep awakes believing in God, whatever he may call it."<sup>40</sup> Persons afflicted with insomnia will probably be dismayed to discover this intimate relation between sleeping and trusting in God. We are all definitely concerned, if not dismayed, that Bradford is willing for God to be referred to as a "What-you-may-call-it." Men have not dared to be flippant about words since the time when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, dividing all mankind into friend and foe. When Bradford says, "It makes no difference how you define God," he is uttering the ultimate blasphemy. Not that he leads men to become sinners. There is something gloriously hopeful about a man who is only a blackened sinner. Bradford would lead men into that den of which it is said no tracks lead out. It is the abode of the one who pretends to destroy the distinction between good and evil. One of his names is Pan. And the footprints of Gamaliel Bradford enter his den.

The Essay on Jones Very will illustrate Bradford's tendency to pantheism. Bradford speaks of Very's "Identification of himself with nature, his losing himself in pure adoration."<sup>41</sup> Now it is perfectly safe to say things like this, if your name is St. Francis of Assisi. But there are some things about St. Francis which even Bradford did not fully grasp. The consequence of Very's type of adoration is the interesting ambition to graduate from manhood and become a flower.

Still, still, my eye will gaze long fixed on thee  
Until I forget I am called a man,  
And at thy side fast rooted seem to be  
And the breeze comes my cheek with thine to fan.<sup>42</sup>

It is unsafe to forget you are called a man, even as it is dangerous to forget that God is named God, and not Nature. The time came when Bradford actually could say, "I love the excesses of pantheism, they cannot be too excessive for me."<sup>43</sup>

The literary achievement of Bradford is directly affected by his failure to define God. Here is a description of human personality: "Souls tremble and shift and fade under the touch. They elude and evade and mock you, fool you with false lights and perplex you with impenetrable shadows, till you are almost ready to give up in despair any effort to interpret them."<sup>44</sup> This kind of thing might be innocent enough, but if

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Biography and the Human Heart*, p. 205.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, qu. p. 207.

<sup>43</sup> *Journal*, p. 519.

<sup>44</sup> Bradford, G., *American Portraits*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922, Preface, p. 12.

you know Bradford you know it is not innocent; it is reeking with skepticism. It is not the illusion of the Book of Hebrews; it is the illusion of Omar Khayyam. This instability of human life raises many questions as to the durability of human standards. Sometimes Bradford seems queerly incapable of making necessary distinctions. Thus he says of Frances Willard, "Miss Willard, with the best intentions, wished to deny to everybody the excitement of alcohol. But she herself lived in the fierce excitement of doing good, beside which all other stimulants are pale and watery."<sup>45</sup> Surely some distinctions need to be made here. After all, if this should become generally known, that doing good is more stimulating than certain types of beverage, it would undoubtedly embarrass the brewers' associations and incorporated distillers in America! And what would become of our government then?

Bradford is fond of the clowns of Shakespeare—a little too fond of them, one might say. Even Falstaff had his limitations, although one feels like a prig in saying so. A clown is quite safe as a clown; just as a fancy is permissible as long as you remember that it is a fancy. But when you become a pantheist, or even a dilettante, you are likely to underestimate the importance of calling a clown a clown. You might even call him a philosopher. All fools are not philosophers any more than all philosophers are fools. Now Bradford's touch is not quite light enough when he says of Shakespeare's clowns, "They take with seriousness matters which the children of this world think trifling, and see as trifles under the haunting aspect of eternity those solemn passions and efforts which grave human creatures regard as the important interests of life."<sup>46</sup> This is clever rather than convincing. Our distinctions may not be ultimate, but they are real—real enough to be given names with sharp edges and definite meanings. In the words of the clown, Bradford thought he had found a philosophy of life, but it was a philosophy of death!

There are moments when Bradford abandons his cynicism, and like Chaucer's Pardoner, speaks in unwonted accents of sudden earnestness. In his excellent book on Pepys he lifts the question, "Why discuss God?" and replies, "because the vast brooding consciousness of God alone gives such a life all its significance, and all its emptiness, and because I believe the busy, active, external, material life of America today, . . . needs God more than anything else to save it."<sup>47</sup> True enough, but did Bradford believe

<sup>45</sup> *Portraits of American Women*, p. 224.

<sup>46</sup> *American Portraits*, p. 221.

<sup>47</sup> Bradford, G., *The Soul of Samuel Pepys*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924, p. 239.



it? Or again he writes in his *Journal*, "I do not dare to read the New Testament for fear of its awakening a storm of anxiety and self-reproach and doubt and dread of having taken the wrong path, of having been traitor to the plain and simple God."<sup>48</sup> Perhaps these words are wiser than he knew.

In a moment of blunt honesty, Bradford exclaimed, "The simple fact is, that if God does not exist, the universe is but a wilderness of barren horror."<sup>49</sup> It was indeed a wilderness of barren horror for Bradford—a place of shadows and shifting mists encircled by the black might of an empty eternity. Now and again Bradford uses great phrases to describe the futility of a universe without God. He says of the death of Margaret Fuller, "she went out like a candle when a window is suddenly opened into great night."<sup>50</sup> Think of Henry Vaughan, writing a poem of heavenly hope as he says of his departed friends, "They are all gone into the world of light." What a difference!

Why is it that Bradford feels the great word "God" dissolving before him and leaving a universe of blank and barren horror? Why does he feel the undergirding of all human standards shaking and trembling? We may be surprised at the answer. We may even be tempted to smile. For the answer is that *science* destroyed his faith. We may feel ourselves removed from that awful controversy between science and religion that made honest men tremble, but it was an intimate and awful reality in its day. In his valuable book, *Darwin*, Bradford enters into the very spirit of popular evolutionary theory.

Before the evolutionary attitude, the observation of plants and animals was at best a mere gratification of curiosity. The proper study of mankind was man, and the investigation of birds and insects was only distraction and diversion. But the instant it appeared that all the threads of life were intertwined and that in disentangling even the slightest of them, you might be getting the clue to the riddle of the whole, all was changed. When it comes to be felt that the history of man, of his instincts, of his passions, of his power, of his future, of his faith, is written in his past, and that past is to be studied, if at all, in the history of the humblest creatures who are animated by the same mysterious impulse of life that moulds and governs him, the interest of natural observation is increased a thousandfold.<sup>51</sup>

This pantheistic version of evolution leads Bradford to think of Darwin as "the destroyer." "It was Darwin who at least typified the rigorous

<sup>48</sup> *Journal*, p. 274.

<sup>49</sup> D. L. Moody, p. 304.

<sup>50</sup> *Portraits of American Women*, p. 163.

<sup>51</sup> Bradford, G., *Darwin*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1926, p. 41.

logic that wrecked the universe for me and for millions of others."<sup>52</sup>

There is one other element in Bradford's life that led him to pantheism. Perhaps it is the very sensibility that gives him such extraordinary intuitional insight into the souls of men and women. Ecstasy is often the by-product of a great loyalty. The temptation of those who feel is to want to feel all the time. This is Bradford's idea of Heaven—to have a perpetual welling of full emotional bliss. Speaking of music, that most romantic of the arts, he says, "When the moment of ecstasy comes it brings heaven with it, and rendered permanent in its supreme intensity, it becomes a type of heaven not wholly unworthy."<sup>53</sup>

It is true that even John Milton desired music to

Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.

But Milton had his romantic strain, too, even verging upon pantheism. It might have been better if he had not cultivated ecstasy for its own sake, and had put some ecstasy into the pedantic discourses of God in *Paradise Lost*. Then we would not hear so much about Satan being more interesting than God, and being the hero of that great poem.

It all comes back to the matter of words—clear-cut words, that mean some things and deny some things. It all comes back to the one true Word—that means everything good and denies everything evil. It was the tragedy and pathos of Gamaliel Bradford that he permitted the unanalyzed assumptions and unauthorized conclusions of pseudo-science to preclude for him the pronouncement of the Word by which he could have been saved and besides which there is no Name under heaven by which one can be saved. He has been called, perhaps not unjustly, the foremost biographer of our modern world. What will future generations say of Gamaliel Bradford? A great biographer? Yes. A great man? I wonder!

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>53</sup> *D. L. Moody*, p. 185.

# The Literature of the Baptists

LEO T. CRISMON

THIS ARTICLE ON BAPTIST bibliography is an expanded form of one which was presented before the American Theological Library Association in 1951. There it included only historical and statistical materials and was intended as a help for locating the materials or for cataloguing them. Here the scope is broadened considerably; the article is intended as a guide for Baptists and persons of any faith to lead them to materials about the Baptists in several different areas of their life. Most of the materials cited are of course by Baptists, that is, Baptists writing about Baptists, or for Baptists. Nearly all the sources are in English. Most of the materials are in book form, but some periodicals are included. It is not claimed that this bibliography is exhaustive, but it is the hope of the writer that it will lead the interested reader into the area of his interest. This is the second in a series to appear in RELIGION IN LIFE, the first, on Methodist bibliography, having appeared in Summer, 1955.

## BAPTIST BIBLIOGRAPHY

The earliest effort here is William Crowell's "Literature of American Baptists, from 1814 to 1864" (in *The Missionary Jubilee: an account of the fiftieth anniversary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, at Philadelphia, 1865*, pp. 391-461). The author prepared the material during the Civil War and is highly prejudiced against persons of his own faith in the South; the work contains many errors, but it is a valuable beginning at bibliography of Baptist publications of all kinds. In Dr. Kerr Boyce Tupper's "Baptist contributions to literature during the nineteenth century" (In Newman, A. H., *A Century of Baptist Achievement*, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society, 1901, pp. 355-364), there is much help in evaluating the literature of Baptists during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Both of these works are in essay form and are not formal bibliographies.

Two catalogues of Baptist collections in England contribute to our knowledge of materials on the English Baptists. They are *Catalogue of*

---

LEO T. CRISMON, A.B., Th.M., Ph.D., is Librarian at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, having been related to the library of that institution for over eighteen years.

the books, pamphlets and manuscripts in the Angus Library at Regent's Park College, London, London, the Kingsgate Press, 1908, and Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland; *A Catalogue of the Baptist Union Library, Baptist Church House, Southampton Row, London, W. C.*, 1915, London, The Kingsgate Press, 1915.

For any guide to manuscript Baptist materials in the United States the best source is Allison, William Henry, *Inventory of Unpublished Material for American Religious History in Protestant Church Archives and Other Repositories*, published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D. C., 1910. This of course contains materials of other denominations.

Only one systematic effort at a full bibliography of Baptist materials in chronological arrangement has been worked out in full. That is William Thomas Whitley's *A Baptist bibliography; being a register of the chief materials for Baptist History, whether in manuscript or in print, preserved in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies . . .* London, The Kingsgate Press, 1916-1922. Vol. I, 1526-1776; Vol. II, 1777-1837. Earlier there had been an effort by W. E. McIntyre of Canada in his *Baptist Authors; a manual of bibliography, 1500-1914*, Montreal, Industrial and Educational Press, Ltd., 1914- (A-DAY only); but the work progressed only from A to DAY in the alphabet. For the area which it covers it is very helpful.

The most extensive work attempted in this field is Edward C. Starr's *A Baptist bibliography; being a register of printed material by and about Baptists, including works written against the Baptists*. Phila., The Judson Press, 1947; Chester, Pa., American Baptist Historical Society, 1952, 1953, 1954. Vol. 1, A (Printed) 1947. Vol. 2, B—Biloxi, 1952 (Mimeographed). Vol. 3, Bin—Bz, 1953 (Mimeographed). Vol. 4, C—Colby, 1954 (Mimeographed).

The author is recognized as the most capable man among us in this field. More help and financial assistance should be given him so that the work can be brought to completion in a reasonable time.

Dr. William Warren Sweet in his *The Baptists, 1783-1830* (Religion on the American Frontier, Vol. 1), 1931 (pp. 629-637) has a good bibliography of the Baptists for the "frontier" area of that period.

#### BAPTIST BIOGRAPHIES

The earliest systematic effort at this task is *The Annals of the American Pulpit* by William B. Sprague, N. Y., Robert Carter and Brothers, 1856-

1869 in nine volumes. Volume six (1865) is *Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit; or commemorative notices of Distinguished clergymen of the Baptist Denomination of the United States, from the early settlement of the country to the close of the year eighteen hundred and fifty-five. With an historical introduction.*

In 1899 George W. Lasher published *The Ministerial Directory of the Baptist Churches in the United States of America, together with a statement of the work of the National Missionary Publication and Young People's Societies, with the Names and location of Educational Institutions and Church papers*, Oxford, Ohio, Ministerial Directory Co.

A work which is very selective and proves to be of use on very few occasions is *Baptist Biography*, Edited by B. J. W. Graham, Atlanta, Ga., Index Printing Company, 1917-1923, 3 volumes. Rather lengthy articles appear of the men who are included.

In 1921 there appeared "An Index to Notable Baptists, whose careers began within the British Empire before 1850" in the *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, Vol, 7, pages 182-239. This work along with *The Baptist Who's Who: an Authorative Reference Work and Guide to the careers of Ministers and Lay Officials of the Baptist Churches*, London, Shaw Publishing Co. Ltd., in conjunction with Kingsgate Press Ltd., 1933, gives very helpful information about British Baptists.

In 1936 *Among Southern Baptists, Volume I*, 1936-37, Shreveport, La., by John S. Ramond, was published. Again the work is highly selective. No later volume has been published.

In some states efforts have been made at collective biography. In Virginia there is *Virginia Baptist Ministers* in six volumes, 1837-1935. In Missouri, five volumes of *Missouri Baptist Biography*, 1914-1925. For Tennessee there are *Sketches of Tennessee's Pioneer Baptist Preachers*, Nashville, 1919 by J. J. Burnett, Volume 1 (no later volume was published) and *Biographical Sketches of Tennessee Baptist Ministers*, Memphis, 1880, by Joseph H. Borum. For Mississippi, *Mississippi Baptist Preachers*, by L. S. Foster, St. Louis, Mo., National Baptist Publishing Co., 1895. Recently the Alabama Baptist Historical Society has published *Biographical Dictionary of Alabama Baptists*, 1920-1947.

#### BAPTIST ENCYCLOPEDIAS

The first of the encyclopedias was *Haynes' Baptist Cyclopedia: or dictionary of Baptist biography, bibliography, antiquities, history, chronology, theology, polity and literature*, Charleston, Samuel Hart, c. 1849,

Vol. 1, AA-FO. It was prepared by Thomas Wilson Haynes. It is marked by a novel scheme of alphabetizing. Only the first volume was published.

For many years the most valuable piece of work of this nature has been William Cathcart's *The Baptist Encyclopaedia, A Dictionary of the Doctrines, Ordinances, Usages, Confessions of Faith, Sufferings, Labors, and Successes, and of the General History of the Baptist Denomination in all Lands*, Phila., L. H. Everts, 1880. It appeared in two volumes, paged continuously. A revised edition, in one or two volumes, appeared in 1883.

For the Freewill Baptists there is G. A. Burgess' *Free Baptist Cyclopaedia, Historical and Biographical, The Rise of the Freewill Baptist Connection and of those General and Open Communion Baptists which, Merging together, Form One People*, Free Baptist Cyclopaedia Co., 1889.

At present there is being prepared an *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, designed to be published in 1957. It will not be so predominantly biographical as the earlier encyclopedias, but rather historical and statistical.

#### BAPTIST HISTORY

History will appear high on the list of persons interested in the Baptists. Among Baptists themselves there is little agreement in regard to the early period of history. Most historians relate the present Baptists to the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century or to some earlier independent group.

For an account of the Anabaptists and other non-Catholic groups from the first to the seventeenth century, perhaps the best treatment is to be found in *A History of Anti-Pedobaptism from the rise of Pedobaptism to A.D. 1609*, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society, 1897, by Albert Henry Newman. In tracing infant and adult, or believer's, baptism and the form of baptism, the author traces the various movements and groups. A more recent work, centering on the Anabaptists (or re-baptizers) is *The Anabaptists*, London, James Clarke & Co., 1935, by R. J. Smithson. The author presents the tenets of the Anabaptists and gives an evaluation of their influence.

The earliest effort at this task was *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and other parts of the world*, Boston, Lincoln and Edmonds, 2 vols., 1813, by David Benedict. He traveled in the United States and gathered materials on the Baptists, then decided to begin his work with "A summary of Ecclesiastical History" and "A miniature History of Baptism, from the apostolic age to the present time." The work was revised and expanded and published in one volume in 1848.



An early effort at tracing the history of modern Baptists is *A History of the Baptists, traced by their vital Principles and Practices from the time of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to the year 1886*, N. Y., Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1887, by Thomas Armitage. Later editions appeared in 1889 and 1893. In 1891 Henry C. Vedder published the first edition of *A Short History of the Baptists*, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society. In 1907 he published a "New and illustrated edition" enlarged to double its original size. A review of it by W. J. McGlothlin in *The Review and Expositor* (1907, Vol. 4, p. 653) states, "It is divided into two parts, the 'History of Baptist Principles' and 'A History of Baptist Churches.' In the first the author begins with the New Testament churches, traces the gradual rise of the Catholic Church and the consequent eclipse of evangelical Christianity in the earlier Middle Ages; then the revival of evangelical principles in the Albigensians, Waldensians, Anabaptists, etc. The second part, as its name suggests, treats of the modern Baptist denomination from the beginning of churches in England and America to the present time, through all the various periods and phases of their growth." Dr. McGlothlin continues in the review, "The work has been thoroughly done. Dr. Vedder has studied the sources on the spot as far as possible. He loves his denomination, but he loves truth too much to make broad assertions that cannot now be substantiated. He claims all that can be claimed in the present state of our knowledge, and does not regard his statements as necessarily final on all disputed points."

A later contribution to this period of history is John T. Christian's *A History of the Baptists, together with some account of their principles and practices*, Nashville, Sunday School Board, S. B. C., 1922 and *A History of the Baptists of the United States from the first settlement of the country to the year 1845*, Nashville, Sunday School Board, S. B. C., 1926. The two volumes "covering the work of Baptists from earliest time to the organizing the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845" (*Publishers Trade List Annual*) are now published and bound as a set, *A History of the Baptists*. They are still in print.

The latest and very popular work in this area is Robert G. Torbet's *A History of the Baptists, with a foreword by Kenneth Scott Latourette*, Phila., Judson Press, 1950. It is still in print.

#### *Baptists in England*

In England where the earliest fully organized Baptist churches developed, their history has been fairly well preserved. The earliest effort

is *The History of the English Baptists*, London, 1738-1740, 3 volumes, by Thomas Crosby.

The next item is of the nature of a contemporary chronicle in *The Baptist Annual Register . . . including Sketches of the State of Religion among different Denominations of good men at Home and Abroad*, 1790-1802, by John Rippon, London, 4 volumes.

Then there follows Joseph Ivimey's four-volume history with the following titles: volume 1, *A History of the English Baptists: including an Investigation of the History of Baptism in England from the Earliest Period to which it can be traced to the close of the seventeenth century*, London, 1811; volume 2, *A History of the English Baptists: containing Biographical sketches and notices of above three hundred ministers, and historical accounts, alphabetically arranged, of one hundred and thirty churches, in the different counties in England: from about the year 1610 till 1700*, London, 1814; volume 3, *A history of the English Baptists: comprising the principal events of the history of protestant dissenters, from the revolution in 1688 till 1760; and the London Baptist Churches, during that period*, London, 1823; volume 4, *A History of the English Baptists: comprising the principal events of the history of the protestant dissenters, during the reign of Geo. III and of the Baptist Churches in London, with notices of many of the principal churches in the country during the same period*, London, 1830.

More recent one-volume efforts at the history of the English Baptists are *The Story of English Baptists*, London, James Clarke & Co., 1905, by John Charles Carlile; and *A History of British Baptists*, London, Charles Griffin & Co., 1923 by William T. Whitley. A revised edition of the latter title appeared in 1932.

The latest effort is *A History of the English Baptists*, by A. C. Underwood, London, Kingsgate Press, 1947. This work brings English Baptist history through the period of the Second World War. *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1911, by William J. McGlothlin, deals with Anabaptist and Mennonite confessions, the English Baptist confessions consuming the major portion of the work, with a little space given to American Baptist confessions.

#### *Baptists in the United States*

The earliest effort at a history of the Baptists in the United States was begun during the Revolution by Isaac Backus in his *A History of New England with particular reference to the denomination of Christians called*

*Baptists*. Volume 1 was published in Boston in 1777; volume 2 at Providence in 1784; and volume 3 at Boston in 1796. Almost a century later the work was revised by David Weston and published in a second edition by the Backus Historical Society in two volumes in 1871.

Reference has already been made to the two editions of David Benedict's *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and other parts of the world on page 120*, although most of the material in it deals with American Baptists.

In the *American Church History Series*, volume 2 is *A History of Baptist Churches in the United States*, N. Y., The Columbian Literature Co., 1894, by Albert Henry Newman. A revised edition was published by the American Baptist Publication Society in 1898.

Attention is here called again to John T. Christian's *A History of the Baptists of the United States from the first Settlement of the Country to the Year 1845*, Nashville, S. S. Board, S. B. C., 1926. There are three periods treated: 1. The Colonial Period; 2. The American Revolution; 3. Period of Growth and Organization.

In 1953 Dr. William Wright Barnes published *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953*, Nashville, Broadman Press. This volume brings Baptist history up to a fairly recent date, however only for the South.

There have been very few periodicals devoted entirely to history of the Baptists. *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, 1908-1919 (vols. 1-6) and its successor *The Baptist Quarterly*, 1922 to date, new series, vols. 1-16 are devoted to British Baptist history. In America only *The Chronicle*, 1938 to date (vols. 1-18) has been devoted entirely to Baptist history.

#### BAPTIST MISSIONS

Because of the importance of missions in the thinking of Baptists there is a very extensive literature of the missions activity since the days of William Carey and the beginning of the modern missionary movement.

We consider first the publication of the *Periodical accounts relative to the Baptist Missionary Society*, London, Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1817. One of the earliest primary sources for Baptist missions, this is a series of small pamphlets issued as reports of the missionary work done in India by William Carey and other members of the mission there.

Then in connection with this movement we present jubilee, centennial, and sesquicentennial volumes. First there is Francis Augustus Cox's *History of the Baptist Missionary Society, from 1792 to 1842 . . . to which is added a sketch of the General Baptist Mission*, London, T. Ward

& Co., 1842, 2 vols. This is an account of the work of the British Baptist Missionary Society, in other countries, of course, besides India, up to 1842 when the jubilee celebration of the Society was held. Second appears John Brown Myers' *Centenary volume of the Baptist Missionary Society*, London, Baptist Missionary Society, 1892. This volume was published in connection with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society and the work of William Carey in India. Third in the group is *Centenary missionary addresses, delivered at missionary conferences and elsewhere under the auspices of the American Baptist Missionary Union, in the years 1892 and 1893*, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1893. These celebrations took place in America as tributes of American Baptists to William Carey and the Baptist Missionary Society for inspiration instilled in the Americans resulting in the missionary activity in America. For the sesquicentennial the following was published by the Baptist Missionary Society, *Ter-jubilee celebrations, 1942-44; programs of meetings and services in London, Kettering, Leicester, Paulersbury, and Northampton, with some of the sermons and speeches, and a statement of contributions to the celebration fund*, London, Baptist Missionary Society, 1945. These 150th anniversary celebrations were held during World War II under very great restrictions as to travel and use of funds. Many missionaries of the Society were being supported by funds contributed by American friends. In this section we also place a volume recording the celebration of American Baptists of their own missionary organization. It is *The missionary jubilee: an account of the fiftieth anniversary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, at Philadelphia, May 24, 25, and 26, 1864, with commemorative papers and discourses*. N. Y., Sheldon and Co., 1865.

Two individual biographies are presented here because the men cannot be separated from the work of their lives. First there is Samuel Pearce Carey's *William Carey, D.D., fellow of Linnaean society . . .* N. Y., George H. Doran Co., 1923. This work is a biography, but it is also history, since so much of the early English Baptist missionary effort centered about William Carey and his many interests and abilities. The work has gone through eight editions, the last published in London in 1934 by the Carey Press, revised and enlarged. The American phase of the work is represented by Edward Judson's *The life of Adoniram Judson, by his son, Edward Judson*, N. Y., A. D. F. Randolph & Co., 1883. With this work we take up the American beginning in Baptist missions. Also a biography, this book deals with historical matters, since Judson was the

first American Baptist foreign missionary and his work in Burma united American Baptists in their missionary effort to organize the Baptist General Convention for Foreign Missions.

Histories of Baptist missions in order of their appearance are as follows: first there is William Gammell's *A history of American Baptist missions in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America*, Boston, Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1849. This is the first effort at a history of American Baptist foreign mission work. Then there follows George Winfred Hervey's *The story of Baptist missions in foreign lands, from the time of Carey to the present date*, St. Louis, Mo., C. R. Barns, 1884. This work deals with English and American Baptist missions, which had now spread to the continent of South America and to many other countries on the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe and North America already mentioned. A "revised and enlarged" edition of the work was published in 1892 by the same publisher. There come next Edmund Franklin Merriam's *A history of American Baptist missions* . . . Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1900. Dealing with the American phase of the Baptist mission expansion, this work brings the story up to 1900. A "revised edition, with centennial supplement" was published in 1913 by the same publisher. This was the centennial year of Judson's beginning in Burma. Then we come to Henry C. Vedder's *A Short History of Baptist Missions*, Phila., Judson Press, 1927. This is the most recent history of Baptist missions with some materials on other Protestant missions. It deals with political, economical and social conditions, as is necessary for an understanding of Christian and Baptist movements in the various countries. A new book is *Venture of Faith: the Story of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society and the Woman's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1814-1954*, by Robert G. Torbet. Phila., The Judson Press, 1955.

The missions efforts of Baptists in the South are dealt with in the following titles; *The foreign missions of the Southern Baptist Convention*, by Henry Allen Tupper, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1880. This is a lengthy history and survey of the missionary enterprise of Southern Baptists, separated from Northern Baptists in 1845. Dr. Tupper, the author, was the corresponding secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1872 to 1893. Related to the above is Henry Allen Tupper's *A decade of foreign missions, 1880-1890* . . . Richmond, Va., Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1891. This is a continuation of the account of Baptist missions in the preceding entry, carrying the story forward for another

ten years. Another treatment is *The Missionary Work of the Southern Baptist Convention*, by Mary E. Wright, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1902.

Two works in the nature of an encyclopedia are included. The first is *The Origin and history of missions . . . compiled from authentic documents; forming a complete missionary repository . . . continued to the present time*, by John Overton Choules and Thomas Smith, Boston, Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1842, 2 vols. This work is included in a "Baptist list" because it is a general history of missions and because one of the authors was a Baptist, and because also it was published by publishers who brought out the works of so many Baptist authors. The work was begun by Thomas Smith who did not live to complete it. Choules, a Baptist teacher, pastor and writer, completed and edited the work. The 1842 edition was the sixth edition of it. The second is *Encyclopedia of missions, descriptive, historical, biographical, statistical, 2d ed.*, Ed. under the auspices of the Bureau of Missions, by Rev. Henry Otis Dwight . . . Rev. H. Allen Tupper . . . , and Rev. Edwin Munsell Bliss . . . N. Y., Funk & Wagnalls, Co., 1904. Again this work is included because one of the editors, Henry Allen Tupper, was a Baptist. This is "a very valuable reference book of descriptive, historical, biographical and statistical material complete for information up to the early years of this century" (*A.L.A. Catalog*, 1926).

Collected biographies of Baptist missionaries are: Walter Sinclair Stewart's *Early Baptist Missionaries and Pioneers*, Phila., The Judson Press, 1925, 2 vols., and *Later Baptist Missionaries and Pioneers*, Phila., The Judson Press, 1928, 2 vols.

A very rich field for Baptist periodicals is the area of missions. *The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* appeared from 1803 to 1817, then the *American Baptist Magazine* and *Baptist Missionary Magazine* with variations in title, through 1909. In 1910 it became *Missions* and has continued to the present. Also *The Latter Day Luminary* appeared from 1818 to 1825. *The Baptist Home Mission Monthly* appeared from 1887 to 1909.

For Southern Baptists the periodicals changed names or combined foreign and home missions interests rather often. The series begins with *The Southern Baptist Missionary Journal*, 1846-1851. Then there appears *The Home and Foreign Journal*, 1851-1861, with *The Commission, or Southern Baptist Missionary Magazine* running concurrently 1856-1861. *The Foreign Mission Journal* then appeared from 1874 until 1916, with



foreign mission materials. *The Home Field* or *Our Home Field* carried home mission news from 1888 until 1916. In 1916 both interests were combined in *Home and Foreign Fields* and that arrangement continued through 1937. In 1938 the interests again separated and since that time we have *The Commission* for foreign interests and *Southern Baptist Home Missions* for home interests.

#### BAPTIST ECCLESIOLOGY

The works of Edward T. Hiscox have been popular among Baptists. *The Baptist Church Directory, A Guide to the Doctrines and Practices of Baptist Churches* was first published in 1859. By 1890 fifty thousand copies had been published. And it had also been translated into six or seven different languages by missionaries for use on foreign fields. In 1890 he published *The Standard Manual of Baptist Churches*, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society. In 1894 *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society was published, and it remained in rather wide use up to recent years. The two latter titles are still in print.

Another man who had great influence on the molding of Baptist doctrines and practice was James M. Pendleton. His *Church Manual, designed for the use of Baptist Churches*, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1867 has been reprinted many times and is still in print.

More strictly from the point of view of ecclesiology, Edwin C. Dargan's *Ecclesiology: a study of the Churches*, Louisville, Ky., Chas. T. Dearing, 1897 was used as a text book for his classes at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. A "Second and carefully revised edition" was published in 1905, somewhat condensed in form.

In 1926 Harvey Eugene Dana published *Christ's Ecclesia; the New Testament Church*, Nashville, Sunday School Board, S. B. C., and it was very popular for years. In 1941 he revised the work and published it as *A Manual of Ecclesiology*, Kansas City, Kan., Central Seminary Press. A still farther revision "in collaboration with L. M. Sipes" appeared in 1944.

A very helpful book appeared in 1929 as *Baptist Churches in Action; a Study of New Testament Principles and Modern Methods of Application*, by G. S. Dobbins, Nashville, Sunday School Board, S. B. C. It has been out of print for several years, but its place has been taken by another work of the author entitled, *The Churchbook; a Treasury of Materials and Methods*, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1951.

*Polity and Practice in Baptist Churches*, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1935 by William Roy McNutt has proved of great interest and value.

#### BAPTIST HYMNOLOGY

Here one foreign language title is included because no source in English gives the materials covered. It is *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer*, Berlin, 1903 by Rudolf Wolkan. This gives an account of the music of the Anabaptists.

The earliest work in English to which attention is called is Hezekiah Butterworth's *The Story of the Hymns; or Hymns that have a history, an account of the origin of hymns of personal religious experience*, New York, American Tract Society, 1875. This work does not deal with Baptist hymn writers alone, but because it was written by a Baptist it is included here. A later edition was completed (1906) by Theron Brown, also a Baptist.

The greatest contribution to this study was made by Henry Sweetser Burrage in his *Baptist Hymn Writers and their Hymns*, Portland, Me., Brown, Thurston & Co., 1888. The author states in his preface, "Among these writers of 'psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs,' Baptists have an honorable place. Indeed, to those who have not given careful attention to this department of Christian literature, it will be a surprise to learn how many of the hymns oftenest on the lips of believers of every name were written by Baptists." A recent contribution to this field of study is *Some Baptist Hymnists from the Seventeenth Century to Modern Times*, London, Kingsgate Press, 1937, by Carey Bonner. It first appeared in four articles in *The Baptist Quarterly*, (London, 1937), but new material, including chapters on American hymn writers, was added when it appeared in book form.

A periodical called *The Church Musician* has been published by the Church Music Department of the Sunday School Board, S. B. C., since January, 1950.

#### BAPTIST THEOLOGY

A century and a half ago in England there were two groups of Baptists, the General Baptists and the Particular Baptists, both named from their views of the atonement, the former holding an Arminian view and the latter the Calvinistic view. The outstanding leader of the General Baptists was Dan Taylor who published several books and edited *The General Baptist Magazine*. The present-day Baptists of England and America, although they do not hold to a rigid Calvinism, are related more directly to the Particular Baptists of England.

In England, among the Particular Baptists, the two great theologians were John Gill (1697-1771) and Andrew Fuller (1754-1815). In regard to John Gill's *A Body of Practical Divinity*, 3 volumes, London, George Keith, 1769, William Cathcart states in *The Baptist Encyclopaedia* (1881, p. 453), "His 'Body of Divinity,' published in 1769, is a work without which no theological library is complete. His grand old doctrines of grace, taken unadulterated from the Divine fountain, presented in the phraseology and with the illustrations of an intellectual giant, and commended by a wealth of sanctified biblical learning only once in several ages permitted to mortals, sweep all opposition before them, and leave no place for the blighted harvests, the seed of which was planted by James Arminius in modern times."

After the death of John Gill a three-volume edition of this work appeared as *A complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity; or a System of Evangelical Truths, deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (London, 1796), and in 1839 a 2-volume edition appeared. However, perhaps John Gill's work should be judged in the light of the fact that today the Old School, or Primitive Baptists, make greater use of his writing since they have recently reprinted his *A complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* (Atlanta, Ga., Turner Lassetter, 1950) and they are now reprinting his commentary on the Bible.

In regard to *The Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (8 volumes, New Haven, S. Converse, 1825; 3 volumes, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1848) William Cathcart in *The Baptist Encyclopaedia* (1881, p. 422) states, "In general his theology is Calvinistic. His treatment of several of 'the doctrines of grace' is such as to afford no comfort to the disciples of James Arminius. His views of the atonement, however, were innovations to the English Baptists of his day, which stirred up vigorous opposition. Dr. Gill was the theological teacher of one section of his denomination, and Mr. Fuller of the other." Although his works are not often referred to in present-day Baptist preaching, Fuller has exerted a great influence on English and American Baptists in their doctrinal beliefs and in their practice.

Robert Hall (1764-1831) whose works were published in several editions (2 volumes, N. Y., 1830; 3 volumes, N. Y., 1832-1833; 6 volumes, London, 1841-1845; 4 volumes, N. Y., 1844), although not designated a General Baptist, held Arminian views. Cathcart (*The Baptist Encyclopaedia*, pp. 489-490) says of him, "He held Arminian views of the atonement, and in a measure of some of the other doctrines of grace, and he spoke

scornfully of the works of Dr. Gill, a writer who knew immensely more of the languages and teachings of the Bible than himself . . ."

In the South especially, James Petigru Boyce's *Abstract of Systematic Theology* was widely used. It was at first "printed (not published) for the exclusive use of his pupils" (Louisville, C. T. Dearing, 1882) at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. It appeared later (Baltimore, H. M. Wharton & Co., 1887) as a "Second printing, but first published edition." It was published by the American Baptist Publication Society also in 1887, and later the same publisher issued an edition "Revised by F. H. Kerfoot" (1899).

Augustus Hopkins Strong of Rochester Theological Seminary influenced Baptist theological thought through his *Systematic Theology: a compendium and commonplace-book designed for the use of theological students*, Rochester, Press of E. R. Andrews, 1886. The one-volume work went through four editions (second, 1889; fourth, 1893). The work later appeared in three volumes with the following note, "The present work is a revision and enlargement of my 'Systematic Theology' first published in 1886;" Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1907-1909. The work is still widely used, especially among students and teachers. It is still in print.

William Newton Clarke's *An Outline of Christian Theology* has been extensively used. The first edition was "For the use of students in Hamilton Theological Seminary (Cambridge, 1894)." It has been through many editions and is still in print.

The next work of this nature which attained prominence was *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression* by Edgar Young Mullins, Phila., New York, Roger Williams Press, 1917. It is still published, by Broadman Press (Nashville, 1942), and it is described by the following note in *Publishers Trade List Annual*, "The book maintains that in Christian experience we have a direct knowledge of God, and in this way we get the only satisfactory religious knowledge that man can obtain."

We close this section on Theology with reference to the writings of Walter Thomas Conner of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The first title to be mentioned is *A System of Christian Doctrine*, Nashville, Sunday School Board, S. B. C., 1924. This work was expanded later in two titles, *Revelation and God: an introduction to Christian Doctrine*, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1936, and *The Gospel of Redemption*, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1945. In 1937 the author published *Christian Doctrine*, Nashville, Broadman Press, as a brief digest of his *System*

of *Christian Doctrine*. He published *The Faith of the New Testament*, Nashville, Broadman Press, in 1940.

Two periodicals are included here. They are *The Review and Expositor* (Louisville, 1904 to date) and *The Southwestern Journal of Theology* (Forth Worth, 1917-1924).

#### BAPTIST STATISTICS

The earliest work of this nature for American Baptists was done by Morgan Edwards (1722-1795), and the work is considered here rather than with the history section because of its sketchy nature and its state of incompleteness. He planned a twelve-volume work on *Materials toward a History of the American Baptists*. Of these only two were published during his lifetime. They were *Materials toward a history of the Baptists in Pennsylvania both British and German, distinguished into Firstday Baptists, Keithian Baptists, Seventhday Baptists, Tuncker Baptists, Menonist Baptists* . . . Phila., Joseph Cruikshank and Isaac Collins, 1770; and *Materials toward a History of the Baptists in New Jersey, distinguished into Firstday Baptists, Seventhday Baptists, Tuncker Baptists, Rogerene Baptists* . . . Phila., Thomas Dobson, 1792. The part relating to Rhode Island was published in *Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society* in 1867 (Vol. VI, p. 302-370); the part relating to Delaware was published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, April, and July, 1885 (Vol. IX, p. 45-61, 197-213), and that relating to North Carolina was published in *The North Carolina Historical Review* in 1930 (Vol. VII, p. 365-399). Other parts of the work dealing with Georgia, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, have recently been typed and microfilmed along with all the printed parts, and they are available at present in many Baptist collections.

John Asplund (1750?-1807) is the next to give statistical figures which he gathered in his travels and through correspondence. His *Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination in North America* was first published in 1790 and revised or reprinted with additions several times so that the latest information to be obtained from it seemed to carry through the year 1795.

Later statistics can be located from Ira Mason Allen's (1795-1849) *The United States Baptist Annual Register, for 1832*, Phila., T. W. Ustick, 1833 and his *The Triennial Baptist Register, No. 2*, 1836, Phila., Baptist General Tract Society, 1836. Then there is available the *Almanac and Baptist Register*, 1841-1846; *The Baptist Almanac and Annual Register*, 1847-1850; *The Baptist Almanac*, 1851-1860; and *The American Baptist Almanac*, 1861-1862. *The American Baptist Register, for 1852*, edited by J. Lansing Burrows, Phila., American Baptist Publication Society, 1853, comes next. Then *The American Baptist Year-Book*, 1868-1940 gives continuous figures for those years. Since 1921 the *Southern Baptist Handbook* has given figures for Baptists in the South.

## Book Reviews

**Protestant—Catholic—Jew.** By WILL HERBERG. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1955. 320 pp. \$4.00.

This is one of the most illuminating books I have read about the actual religious situation in America. Ministers and all who have positions of responsibility in the Church should read it in order to understand better the conditions under which they are working. Will Herberg is unique and the one person who could have written this book or anything like it. He is a Jew in his own religious connection, but he has been deeply influenced by Protestant theology, especially by Reinhold Niebuhr. Also, he is one of the few non-Catholics who write regularly for *The Commonweal*, the leading organ of Catholic lay intellectuals, and in other ways he is able to get a hearing from Catholics.

His first book, *Judaism and Modern Man*, was a book of Jewish theology. It was influenced by Christian thought but it avoids Christian symbols. Professionally he is a free-lance writer and speaker who deals chiefly with religion. He has been remarkably effective on scores of college campuses, where he often appears under Protestant auspices and battles forcefully with the "idolatries" which he finds among faculties and students. Much of his work appeals to both Jews and Christians because it is based upon the biblical criticism of idolatry made relevant to contemporary culture. But this second book is not polemical in its main thrust; it is primarily an effort to understand the religiousness of America and its relation to the historic faiths.

Mr. Herberg brings together the evidence for what he calls "the contemporary upswing in religion" in America. Much of this is familiar, but there is more of it than I have seen anywhere else. Take the remarkable fact which he cites that, high as the figures for church membership are, many more people think of themselves as active members of the churches than even those figures suggest. Or take the statistics about the attitude of Americans to religious leaders in comparison with political and business leaders. In 1942, 17.5 per cent of the people (in a Roper poll) thought that religious leaders were "doing the most good"; in 1953, 40 per cent gave that answer.

Mr. Herberg believes that secularism, as a self-conscious outlook, or explicit opposition to religion and the church has almost disappeared from American life. He points out that the militant atheist, Robert G. Ingersoll, was a prominent Republican politician who nominated Blaine at the Republican convention in 1876, and contrasts that fact with what would be conceivable today. Herberg puts all of the evidence for this revival of interest in religion over against the facts which show how much religious illiteracy there is and how weak the religious commitment and how superficial the understanding of religion seem to be. He cites the very vague and religiously empty convictions of most of the distinguished citizens who have contributed to the volumes titled *This I Believe*. He says that when thirty outstanding Americans were asked to rate the hundred most significant events in history, the discovery of America had first place and the birth of Christ had fourteenth place! There is much more of this. He asks how there can be so much religious interest and so much identification with the churches and so little commitment and understanding.



Mr. Herberg's explanation is based to a considerable extent on the difference between the second and the third generations of immigrants. The second generation rebelled against their fathers' traditions, including their religious traditions. He quotes Marcus Hansen's words, "What the son wishes to forget, the grandson wishes to remember." Today it is expected that any family that came to this country from abroad during the past three generations should retain its traditional religious faith. To become Americanized many of the old traditions have had to be left behind—but not religion. And so, today, most Americans whose recent ancestors came from abroad identify themselves in religious rather than in ethnic terms. They are all Americans but they are Protestant, Catholic or Jewish Americans and they are proud of it. The idea of America as one melting pot proved to be wrong. There are three melting pots—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish. The average American today identifies himself as a person in terms of his religion. This, Herberg believes, is the sociological foundation of the revival of religion. He does not mean that we can explain away religious faith in these terms, but that we have here a very favorable predisposing factor.

The average American assumes that there must be three faiths. This assumption of religious pluralism is one of the unique features of American religious life. Herberg believes that most Catholic laymen assume this even though it is incompatible with their Church's teaching. There is this background of the three faiths, but Herberg believes that most Americans regard these historic faiths as meaningful because they give support to the American way of life. He has much to say that is very critical about this common American religiousness, which he regards as the most vital form of religion in America today.

Always Herberg emphasizes both the opportunity and the temptation which this situation creates for the churches. He may make the temptation more vivid than the opportunity. But it is remarkable that most Americans today, for whatever reason, do put themselves under the influence of churches, which are the bearers of particular faiths that are the best correctives for the aberrations which go with this American religiousness. The churches have an opportunity that they have never had in American history and which they have in few other countries today.

Everyone can learn something important from this book about the American religious situation, and Protestants can learn much that they probably do not know about Judaism and Catholicism. The following sentence may startle Catholics as much as Protestants: "It is because it has become one of the three great 'religions of democracy,' and not because of its claim to speak as the Universal Church, that American Catholicism is today listened to with respect and attention by the American people."

JOHN C. BENNETT

Professor of Christian Theology and Ethics, Union Theological Seminary,  
New York City.

**Faith and Freedom.** By BARBARA WARD. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1954. 308 pp. \$3.75.

This very readable and stimulating book was written, as the author confesses in a note at the beginning, under the influence of the writings of Christopher Dawson, Jacques Maritain, Reinhold Niebuhr, Arnold Toynbee, and R. H. Tawney. No doubt any one of her teachers and mentors would have conceived and written her book more profoundly than Barbara Ward herself has done, but perhaps none

of them would have written it so well and with so much appeal to the general reader. We might also add that none of them could have written the chapters on contemporary economic policy with the special knowledge and mastery of the subject which, as might have been expected of her, Miss Ward consistently displays.

This, of course, is one of the many books about the mess into which Western Civilization has got itself which now succeed and jostle with each other in such profusion and variety in the bookstores and on the publishers' lists. Many readers, perhaps are growing tired of this literary theme and developing a habit of passing by such volumes with averted eyes. It is to be hoped, however, that this particular essay in the diagnosis of our Western maladies will not be ignored or soon forgotten, for it is one of the comparatively few books of this kind which is really well written, which the reviewer can heartily recommend with a good conscience.

For Barbara Ward is much more than a well trained and highly competent economist endowed with a gift rare among economists, an attractive and lucid prose style. She is also a well read amateur theologian and a wide-sympathied, profoundly concerned humanist. The result is a work of synthesis which is at once distinguished by prophetic powers of diagnosis, historical understanding, and economic realism.

This is a Christian book, and it therefore understands the development of Western civilization not primarily in terms of revolutions which reject the traditions of our civilization as outworn in favor of new social forms which replace them with healthy novelty, but rather in terms of a prophetic purgation, a return to our basic traditions combined with a rejection of alien elements which have intruded themselves and a demand that we should repent of our disloyalties, backslidings and apostasies. The idea that there is any resemblance between the prophetic tradition of the Bible and the modern tradition of political revolution is always a superficial and misleading one. We might put it another way by saying that the prophets of the Bible, if they are to be regarded as revolutionaries, are conservative revolutionaries, revolting not against the tradition itself but against obtrusive novelties, out of harmony with the tradition, which have obscured and corrupted it.

Our modern political revolutions have been radical revolutions which have ignored the distinction between the true substance of the Western tradition and the alien intrusions which it has tolerated to its hurt, and have rejected both in the name of a speculative and imaginative picture of the future which all our revolutions have equally failed to translate into actuality. Modern revolutionary movements neither restore the true and essential substance of the Western tradition nor succeed in setting up the beckoning, mirage-like utopia. All they have ever done is to continue the age-old corruptions in new and variant forms. The difference between the spirit of Christian and biblical prophecy on the one hand and secular revolutionism on the other is thus quite fundamental.

If Christians throughout the world would see and realize this more clearly, we should be freed from the widespread illusion of so many people that we can best represent and continue the prophetic tradition of the Bible in the modern world by overtly sympathizing with and espousing the cause of the left-wing secular revolutions of our time. From the standpoint of prophetic Christianity left-wing religion is as suspect and unauthentic as right-wing religion. True Christian understanding transcends the strife and contention of right and left and confronts us with deeper issues than those which are present to the minds of both secular conservatives and secular revolutionaries.

Miss Ward's book provides an excellent introduction to contemporary Christian politics. The reader should perhaps be warned, however, that it is quite frankly a Catholic book, not Catholic in the sense of overtly grinding the axe of the Roman or any other Church, but Catholic in the sense that the theological and prophetic presuppositions which underlie it are quite unmistakably of the Catholic kind. Thus there is the concern with what she calls "Law and Logos," derived from the Greco-Roman world and perpetuated in Catholic Christendom in the so-called "Doctrine of Natural Law." Again the Christ for her is essentially the new man, the Second Adam in whom man attains his destiny and through whom God fulfills his purpose in creating man. He is not only the Redeemer of sinners, as so often in the traditional preaching of what is called "Evangelical" Christianity, but also, as in the New Testament and early Church Fathers, the inaugurator of the Kingdom of God, the personal substance and meaning of history itself. "With the concept of God Incarnate in history and the institution of a sacramental system," she writes, "we are at the core of Christianity" (p. 64). This reviewer concurs whole-heartedly, but there will be those readers who will react more hesitantly.

Again, she is always deeply impressed with the tremendous importance, both in Western history and in the contemporary Western situation, of the role of the visible institutional church, or, it might be better to say, of the institutions which sacramentally embody and express the reality of the Church on earth. For her the Western tradition of freedom is a kind of by-product of the Church-State tension. The existence of the Church brings into the life of man another and competing loyalty existing side by side with the loyalty to State and Nation, each presenting the other from exerting an all-inclusive totalitarian claim upon its subjects. To preserve the freedom, we need to preserve the tension. Christian civilization cannot remain Christian civilization without the continual presence of the institutional church and its concrete claims upon the loyalties of men.

In short, this is a very good book indeed, always readable, often profound, perhaps the best popular introduction to the contemporary political thought of Catholic Christendom now available.

J. V. LANGMEAD CASSERLEY

Professor of Dogmatic Theology, General Theological Seminary, New York City.

**The Dignity of Man.** By RUSSELL W. DAVENPORT. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955. vii-338 pp. \$4.00.

This last literary testament of a prominent journalist and publicist is a moving and thoughtful appeal for a clarification of American faith. Russell Davenport had the mind and conscience to apply the tests of ultimate truth to our American ways—a quality of spirit which is not always apparent in our writers of journalistic rank. It is a pity, therefore, that he was not given time to carry through the intellectual project to which he gave the last years of his life. His project was designed for a study of "the special mission and meaning of his country," designed for "the intelligent layman who is deeply involved in the forces of his time and earnestly seeking a way to master them."

Davenport died of a heart attack before he had completely sketched out even this first introductory volume, which was prepared afterward for publication from his chapter drafts and notes. The resulting impression of unevenness, with some

ambiguity of meaning, should not prevent readers from appreciating the vigor and sharpness of the author's analyses and constructive argument. It is a book which laymen can read, but of philosophical substance, and fruitful in understanding, hope, and faith.

The ground for our failure to offer to the world a sound and vigorous alternative to communism, Davenport argues, is not selfishness or lack of good will; it is our philosophical immaturity. We have been too busy to think objectively. Marxian communism, by contrast, offers a pattern of thought which fits the development of modern economic and political life; this is the ground for its appeal. We have no answer to it because we have gone so long a mile with its intellectual and cultural assumptions; the underlying assumptions of both communism and American life are naturalistic, materialistic, and falsely optimistic. Both believe in the perfectibility of man, in happiness as a moral goal, and in the power of man to achieve perfection through the control of matter. Both ways of thinking aim at freedom and brotherhood through the acceptance of a common "truth," but both the Dialectical Man of Communism and the Industrial Man of America must ultimately find only doubt and fear.

An adequate philosophy of freedom, on the other hand, must penetrate behind this materialism and optimism; it must repudiate the doctrine of human perfectibility, accept a healthy pessimism about human goodness, and rediscover the true ground of human worth and value, which we may once more find where St. Augustine once found it—in man's inwardness and awareness of self, and in the operation upon this inward man of divine grace. In short, Davenport finds his answer in a fusion of the absolute value and power of truth with the Christian doctrine of God and man.

As against many blind efforts to find an answer to the problems of modern man, Davenport's analysis and answer offer a welcome stability and strength. At a time when liberalism is "tired" and we are widely urged to find our answers in "the new conservatism" with its reliance upon the abiding values of our tradition, it is well to be reminded that our tradition, too, is mixed, and that there is no answer to the dilemmas of modern man short of a persistent united effort to think about ultimate and abiding truths, and a commitment that does not shun suffering. Such an answer may not be widely welcomed, but it is needed if we are to be challenged to a renewed liberalism which retains faith in reason as part of faith in God, and carries the conviction that freedom and brotherhood involve each other so that neither can be won without the other.

Certain weaknesses in argument of the book would no doubt have disappeared in the rewriting which death prevented. Mr. Davenport is, of course, the political journalist who for years gave character to the editorial policies of *Life* and *Time* and who discovered Wendell Willkie, the new Republican. In his more particularistic vein, he can ridicule "cornucopian welfare" as erroneous "Trumanism." To argue too uncritically that Americanism must be rooted in a Christian philosophy is to expose oneself to the danger of the converse, that Christianity implies the American Way. The author does, it must be said, struggle with the difference between the popular and the Christian notions of freedom, yet though he says many true things here, the bond between true freedom and brotherhood is not clearly established.

The weakness of Davenport's argument, in summary, is that, falling short of the absolute meaning of Christianity, its emphasis upon understanding leads to

a neglect of the demanding and sacrificial nature of Christian morality. What, for example, would happen to American business and foreign policy, and to the economic freedom which we prize, if this Christian experience of inward need and interdependence should become a dominant force in our common life? To this point the book takes the thoughtful reader, but without raising the question. This same thoughtful reader, however, if earnestly seeking the truth about our dilemmas and willing to think about them, will have his understanding deepened and his convictions challenged by this book.

LEROY E. LOEMKER

Professor of Philosophy, Emory University, Emory University, Georgia.

**The Bent World: A Christian Examination of East-West Tensions.** By J. V. LANGMEAD CASSERLEY. New York: Oxford University Press, 1955. ix-286 pp. \$4.00.

The title is a phrase from a sonnet of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Dr. Casserley picks it to indicate that our world today, for all its troubles, is not shattered but is askew. It needs to be straightened, pointed in its proper direction, brought back to its true destiny. And Casserley is modestly hopeful that our civilization can be restored.

The book amounts to an evaluation of our many-sided contemporary culture. Part I is a study of the threat of Marxism and its Soviet development. It is a searching analysis, the more effective because it avoids the usual nasty words and tries to get at the inner rationale of Communism. With brevity, clarity, and penetration it reaches the main issues and several subsidiary issues often overlooked in this sort of discussion.

Part II—almost five times as long—investigates the dynamics and structures of Western culture. The particular topics treated are: democracy as a method of government and as a religion, the impact of technology, the obsession with economic activity and economic doctrines, nationalism, the family, and—the general theme which runs through all the rest—secularism.

Casserley's conclusion is that the Communist threat is so potent because "Western civilization in its secular phase is half-Marxist already." This secular mood "is sapping its vitality and menacing its future." "The really powerful alternative to Marxism is not a pagan and secularized individualistic democracy but the Christian interpretation of human existence in society and history."

This bare thesis, of course, has been repeated often. But the valuable novelty of Casserley's treatment lies in the combination of information and generalizations and in the quality of the insights which are often quite unconventional. For example, his chapter on the family moves far beyond the usual two well-rutted paths: first, the dreary legalisms of some hidebound traditionalists and, second, the adolescent rapture of those who do little but exult in their emancipation from past inhibitions. Casserley, by contrast, moves quickly past these commonplaces and opens up some unusual patterns of argument. They are controversial and frequently invite counter-arguments. But one can hardly refute them without learning from them.

The virtue of the book as a whole is its great suggestive power rather than its precision of thought. Those who read it to learn will find a rich play of ideas that provoke further ideas. Those who read to criticize will find it vulnerable at severable points.

The greatest weakness, as I see it, is that the argument against secularism sometimes drifts into a kind of slogan-thinking which Casserley elsewhere skillfully exposes. Too often it appears simply that the churches are good and secularism is bad. Casserley admits that "a non-prophetic Christianity inevitably encourages non-Christian forms of prophecy"; but he applies this insight to the Russian situation in contrast to the Western. He shows—rightly, I think—an affinity between Christianity and democracy. But he seems unaware that, in fact, democracy has often had to fight, and in some places still has to fight, churches which want to cling to feudal privilege. He is hardly aware that religious freedom, though it is a logical implication of the Christian gospel, came to Western society with the advance of secularism.

Futher, he is inclined to lump the many varieties of secularism in a blanket indictment that does not cover them all equally. Thus he says that Western secularism is likely to be as materialistic (in a practical sense) as Marxism. This judgment is certainly true of a common creed of greedy competition which acknowledges no major social force other than the profit motive. But it does not fit all secularism. It is not accurate to assume that Dewey's pragmatism teaches that "only material satisfactions are worth working for." Dewey's secularism deserves pointed Christian criticism, but the criticism must be more subtle than Casserley's.

With this indictment of secularism Casserley gives an idealized picture of functioning Christianity. He is refreshingly forthright in praising "downright dogmatic and institutional Christianity" rather than "idealistic aspiration," but he is not equally forthright in seeing the crimes that such Christianity has committed. Casserley, who frequently refers to a fallen world, knows that institutional Christianity is not perfect; but he stacks the cards consistently for it and against secularism.

The book shows other, more incidental blind spots. One is for the Reformation, which gets blamed for nationalism in an analysis that is far too glib. And in concentrating on the real wrongs in Puritanism, Casserley ignores its real virtues with much less generosity that he shows to medieval asceticism which also produced some weird exhibits. Again, he skillfully criticizes the ideology of feminism, apparently without seeing the equally foolish ideologies of anti-feminism. In another area he asserts too readily that an economic system "is essentially peripheral to our civilization and does not affect its essential substance." I doubt that such a statement does justice to the ways in which spirit and institutions together produce the distinctive qualities of a culture.

Of course, it may be that when I point to deficiencies in this book I merely mean that I disagree with parts of it. Despite these disagreements, I expect to refer frequently to this volume, both to refresh my thinking where I agree and to prod my mind where I disagree. It is clearly worth reading and coming back to later.

The book evidences substantial, but unobtrusive learning. It deserves to have an index, which somehow got left out. It is written in a semi-popular style which combines directness with urbanity and which makes its reading a pleasure as well as a thoughtful experience. It possesses in good measure the qualities which have contributed to the growing reputation of this Englishman who now makes his home at General Theological Seminary in New York.

ROGER L. SHINN

Professor of Theology, Vanderbilt University School of Religion, Nashville, Tennessee.



**Religious Symbolism.** Edited by F. ERNEST JOHNSON. New York: The Institute for Religious and Social Studies; distributed by Harper & Brothers, 1955. ix-263 pp. \$2.50.

This publication of the Institute for Religious and Social Studies is based on lectures given at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America during the winter of 1952-1953. Each of the fourteen chapters in this volume corresponds to an individual paper. While the editor has managed to achieve a certain amount of organization in the order of presentation, no attempt has been made to formulate an organic approach to the subject of religious symbolism. The resulting diversity of views is emphasized by an extreme variety of points of view. It is not only that Jewish theologians appear side by side with Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars in the field, but the symposium brings forth the insights of a philosopher, a psychologist, a dramatist, and architect, and even a dancer. And it is very well thus, because each and every one has the most original contribution to make on a subject which defies systematization.

As a rule, symposia have a rather bad press, yet there is a place for them in this age of increasing specialization, especially in the study of symbols and their contribution to expression, communication, worship, and the meditation of higher truth. Again, the unevenness which too often weakens symposia is noticeably absent from these pages. The result is a book rich in fresh information as well as in the most precious insights. Indeed the organizers of this present series are to be congratulated on a unique selection of lecturers.

Just as every man participating in this symposium has been allowed full freedom of individual presentation, every reader should be expected to explore these pages on his own, so as to discover what is truth for him on a subject which proceeds mostly upon an existential concern. Thus it appears that in spite of what Webster has to say on the meaning of the word "symbol," it is evident that the various authors have their own views as to what the definition of that word should be. Cyril C. Richardson in the opening paper considers the symbol as a sort of fountainhead from which a great variety of meanings and relationships flow, and this truly constitutes an understatement on his part. Later, coming to the consideration of the sacred fish in the catacombs and in the collective notions of the early church, he is forced to the conclusion that its symbolism means practically everything.

As may be expected, a Roman Catholic like Daniel J. Sullivan takes more formal views. He wants to distinguish between the illustrative values of words, signal flags, traffic signs on the one hand, and truly liturgical symbols on the other. His methodical approach to the subject is as thorough as it is highly competent. His short paper on "Symbolism in Catholic Worship" is a model presentation. Yet one should welcome a more detailed preliminary consideration of the ways in which the symbol proper is to be distinguished from such near equivalents as sign, emblem, type, allegory, metaphor, parable, simile—to name only a few parallel categories.

In Chapter VI, "Theology and Symbolism," Paul Tillich comes to grips with this same issue and brings out the need of such differentiation, yet merely to illustrate the fact that every symbol points to something beyond itself. In Chapter VIII, Arland A. Dirlam, an architect, sums up the situation we still face as he terms "symbolism" "perhaps the most loosely employed word" in the entire vocabulary of his field.

The same variety, if not conflict, of opinion comes into view with reference

to the relevance of religious symbolism. To Abraham Joshua Heschel, the most powerful symbolism proves futile to the religious man who lives in the immediacy and depth of certainty. The clamor for symbols throughout the whole history of religion would seem to suggest an eternal pursuit of idols. Seen in this light, symbolism constitutes an alluring trap (Chapter IV, "Symbolism and Jewish Faith"). Another Jewish view on "The Future of Religious Symbolism" (Chapter XII) echoes this same concern. Having given a summary of Jewish ritual practice, Mordecai M. Kaplan exposes its manifestations as responsible for the alienation of many Jews from traditional religion.

No wonder a prophetic Protestantism takes a similar attitude. It is a fact that the Reformed tradition continues to harbor a deep suspicion against liturgy and its symbols. And yet one may wonder how and why a Christianity which takes pride in constantly referring to the early Faith as the prototype can discriminate against its undeniably symbolic forms of expression. As the opening chapter points out, the Christianity of the catacombs and of the primitive church sought the highest expression of its life in a whole realm of sacramental symbolism. This being the case, any true Protestant revival should imply a liturgical revival. In his paper (Chapter II) on "The Liturgical Revival in Protestantism," Marvin P. Halverson goes so far as to speak of the loss of that liturgical dimension in the Reformed tradition, ascribing to it a loss of coherence and integrity, with the result that our patterns of worship appear for the most part as fragmented, distorted, and vestigial forms. Present attempts at a revival may be welcomed, accordingly, as signs of a healthy reaction.

In his already quoted paper, Tillich is more outspoken still. As he sees it, we need symbolization "as full and rich as possible" by the same token as we need demythologization against the confusion of literalism with symbolism. He even goes so far as to say that finding the means of such realization constitutes the great problem of Protestantism after the same has gone through four hundred years of historical criticism. Even the gentle, scholarly Stanley Romaine Hopper, in the searching concluding Section XIV ("The Future of Religious Symbolism—a Protestant View") is hard put to it to do justice to this Protestant Protest against Protestantism. Yet his well-informed insights into the future invite nothing short of a revolution in outlook and strategy.

Turning to this order of consideration, one labors under the feeling that the whole inquiry should be thrown open to fresh contributions if constructive solutions are to speak to our condition. Such feeling, no doubt, was shared by the organizers of this symposium. The realm of new possibilities is well outlined by Daniel J. Fleming in Chapter V, "Religious Symbols Crossing Cultural Boundaries," and in the pungent Catholic view of Father John LaFarge on "The Future of Religious Symbolism," whose directness is truly admirable. There looms up a glorious widening of our horizon in Chapter VII ("A Psychologist's View of Religious Symbols") as Goodwin Watson opens up fascinating possibilities of renewal for the religious symbolism of tomorrow. Again there is a fresh approach to the creativeness of symbolism in the construction of new churches, to wit the churches of Goodhue and his followers, in Chapter VIII, "Symbolism in Contemporary Church Architecture," which concludes with a moving profession of faith. Chapters X and XI on "Symbolism in Contemporary Literature," by Nathan A. Scott, and "Religious Drama," by Marion Wefer, enrich the secular part of the contribution, and they are beautifully done.

Since after all the present symposium shunned any systematic approach, it might just as well have opened with the highly delightful paper contributed by the "dancer," Ted Shawn (Chapter IX, "Religious Use of the Dance"). Here is a variation on a rare theme: how a man can be led by circumstances to do the unexpected thing or become what he did not mean to be in the first place. Thus St. Justin told us of old in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, how and why he became a Christian philosopher. Playrights occasionally seized upon this type of theme to draw comic effects. Molière, for example, has staged the case of that commoner who became "a physician in spite of himself." Chapter IX, then, opens with the confession of a man who, from early childhood, had the fixed idea of becoming a Methodist preacher. Having been quarantined for months by diphtheria, he felt induced to think for himself, to a point where he bravely made a truly Cartesian decision to believe only that truth which he would make his own. In order to counteract a state of paralysis resulting from his illness he subsequently took to the therapy of dancing, later witnessing a dance which to him was a true form of worship. Hence a genuine conversion experience, which drew his attention to the Bible's glowing testimony to dancing as an expression of the ineffable in religious life. And so he danced hymns, even a benediction, and proceeded to the richest forms of symbolic expression in and through the dance. So true it is that the highest realities cannot be spoken but have to be acted. Progressively he was introduced to a genuine understanding of Christian ritual, liturgy and worship, to the conception of Christian congregations on the move. This modern version of the medieval juggler of Notre Dame goes a long way to show the desirability of new approaches to the meaning and relevance of religious symbolism in our day and age.

In the necessarily limited space at his disposal this reviewer has hardly begun to suggest the wealth of insight made available by the symposium under consideration—one of the most rewarding and refreshing volumes that he has come across in recent years. As such it should prove precious to those of us who feel that the time is long overdue when theologians and churchmen should open doors and windows on the inviting horizons extending beyond the confines of the confessional ivory tower.

EMILE CAILLIET

Stuart Professor of Christian Philosophy, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.

**Christianity Past and Present.** By BASIL WILLEY. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1952. vii-150 pp. \$2.00.

**Belief and Unbelief Since 1850.** By H. G. WOOD. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1955. viii-143 pp. \$2.75.

The annual series of lectures sponsored by the Divinity Faculty of Cambridge University has given us some notable volumes: Professor Butterfield's *Christianity and History*, Dr. Whale's *Christian Doctrine*, Professor Dodd's *The Bible Today*. Here are two more of the same high quality.

Professor Willey's should be extremely valuable. It is a kind of brief history of apologetics: a study of the intellectual foundations on which Christian truth has rested in the past, and rests today. He confesses himself uneasy at a current fashion in apologetics; cashing in, he calls it, on our present discontent. See what a mess the world is in, the church says; if you had only heeded us, you'd have been better

off. He suggests that there may be more positive reasons for accepting the Faith.

Professor Willey is professor of English literature at Cambridge, and is well known for his studies in the literature and thought of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The chapters on Christianity and the Greek world, the Middle Ages, mysticism and humanism, are as fine and sympathetic studies of these areas as one could find. He takes very seriously the movements of Deism and the honest doubting of humanists like Huxley, feeling that the contemporary apologist and theologian is ill advised to relegate these movements too simply to the "un-biblical" ash heap. Students of literature will be intrigued by his interpretation of Wordsworth.

The most engrossing chapter for most readers, however, will be the final one, in which the author tries to set down the grounds for Christian belief today. He accepts, he says, the contribution of men like Kierkegaard, but prefers the kind of approach that was worked out by Coleridge.

Some passages from the final chapter will give a flavor of the honesty and stimulation that this book can give. "To the many despairers of modern times Kierkegaard's challenge may have brought the only possible invigoration, but I distrust an apologetic which derives its force from the existence of inward or outward agony. The remark, 'Ah, but you would have believed this if you had been in Buchenwald or Belsen' seems to me to have dangerous implications. It might imply that the survival of religion depended upon the perpetuation of removable evil: a notion that no Christian could entertain." (pp. 140-1)

Why, then, do I believe? he asks. "Is it only because I have been nurtured in the Christian atmosphere, and have unconsciously transferred to an imaginary historical figure the reverence due to the Word made flesh? I do not know; it may be so; but while I am deciding on this there is life to be lived, and the daily need for redeeming grace. I can't wait for certainty, but I must try to understand the Incarnation, if possible, without abandoning the criteria of truth which govern the rest of life. I am prepared for the leap into faith, but I am liberal-rationalist enough to hope this need not mean the 'crucifixion of the intellect.'" (p. 147)

Can I believe in the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection? he continues. "I am allowed by some theologians, but not by others, to regard the former as a pious myth, expressing in the most striking way possible a sense that Christ was indeed of God. But I am not allowed, I think, to regard the Resurrection in this way. Yet, try as I may, I cannot bring myself to feel that my religion ought to stand or fall by the historical accuracy of such a story as this. . . . If I really knew that it happened, or that any other miracle happened—if it could be demonstrated to me, then I should have to accept it, and it would no longer be a truth of faith. As long as it remains a truth of faith, however, it can mean 'I hold, by faith, that the sovereignty of God triumphs over the ambiguous course of history, and I hope, through repentance, that that faith may be kept real in me.'" (pp. 147-8)

If the Church does not mean this, he adds, "I have to keep my mouth shut during the recital of the creeds. The learned and ingenious attempts by theologians of all times to explain exactly how the divine and human natures were united in Christ seem to me a standing example of the misuse of reason in regions beyond its competence. They are, I fear, more damaging to religion than the attacks of the infidels." (p. 149)

Both the historical and the confessional parts of this little book will stimulate and excite, both by their penetration and by their humility.

*Belief and Unbelief Since 1850* is perhaps a more specifically English book. It is a study in the contrast between the religious situation of a century ago and today in England. There are interesting sections on the doctrines of predestination and atonement, then and now; a fine chapter on the impact of Darwin on orthodoxy; one on the rise of literary criticism of the Bible and the struggle to establish it. Perhaps most interesting to American readers will be the chapter on "religious experience"—a spirited defense of this misused expression. In his chapter on Victorian and contemporary ethics, Dr. Wood deals with the problem of the objectivity of ethical standards, and attempts to meet the challenge of the analytical movement in philosophy.

The book concludes with an account of the influence of Renan and *Ecce Homo* on English Christianity, and an admirably balanced estimate of the relation of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.

"The quest for the Jesus of history set out under the sign, *Ecce Homo*. It was to discover the man, and it expected to find a teacher of ethics, the best and wisest perhaps, but still a teacher pointing us to a truth independent of his person. But when we meet the Jesus of history we find that he is more than a teacher. His mission is, if possible, more important than his message, and his message cannot be divorced from his mission. He shows us what men ought to be and may be, because he shows us what God is." (p. 137)

These two books are both admirable and provocative. Professor Willey's in particular contains counsel that we in this country would do well to listen to, even when we cannot follow.

WILLIAM HAMILTON

Assistant Professor of Christian Theology and Ethics, Colgate Rochester Divinity School, Rochester, New York.

**Christian Ethics: Sources of the Living Tradition.** Ed. by WALDO BEACH and H. RICHARD NIEBUHR. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955. viii-496 pp. \$5.00.

As the subtitle of the book indicates, this is a collection of source material in Christian ethics. Of the sixteen chapters only two are entirely the product of the editors. The first chapter is an introduction to biblical ethics, and the last chapter is a summary of current trends. Each of the other fourteen chapters consists of carefully chosen excerpts from original writings, prefaced by a brief but illuminating essay on the life and the teachings of the individual concerned. The material reproduced from our Christian heritage has been selected for its treatment of major themes and for its universal and permanent relevance.

In developing a principle of selection the editors have had regard both for the unity and for the variety of the Christian tradition. They have addressed themselves to the question: What does it mean to be a Christian? The love of God and the love of neighbor are basic motifs in the tradition, and problems of the nature of God and of the nature of man must be a part of the inquiry. The editors see a distinction between the ethics of duty and the ethics of aspiration. Yet in spite of these unifying themes and categories, there is an extraordinary diversity of material in this book.

After the introductory chapter on the Bible, the ethics of the early church is represented by selections from the *Didache* and from the letters of St. Clement.

This is followed by the benign rationalism of Clement of Alexandria, and then by excerpts from Augustine's *City of God*. Monasticism is reflected in the rule of St. Benedict and in the *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, mysticism in Bernard of Clairvaux and in Meister Eckhart, and scholasticism in Thomas Aquinas on virtue and on law. Martin Luther is represented by his catechetical writings on the ten commandments, the creed, and the Lord's Prayer; Calvin, by his discussions of the nature of man and of civil government; Puritanism by Richard Baxter, and the Quakers by Robert Barclay. For the eighteenth century we have Bishop Butler on self-love and benevolence, John Wesley on perfectionism and on his economic ethics, and Jonathan Edwards on the nature of true virtue. Kierkegaard stands for the nineteenth century, and Rauschenbusch's *Theology for the Social Gospel* for the early twentieth.

If I say that I miss something in this compilation, then that is probably a confession of personal prejudice rather than a criticism of the competence of the editors. What I miss is the sense of the intricate involvement of the Christian fellowship in problems of political power, of economic justice, of racial discrimination, of the several civil liberties, of war and of peace. I should appreciate a passage from Roger Williams' *Bloudy Tenent*, something from a Leveler or a Digger, a chapter from that great Protestant liberal who was John Locke, selections from *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, a bit of Martin Luther on political and ecclesiastical issues, and a transcript of St. Bernard tackling Abélard or the anti-Semites or the Pope rather than discoursing sweetly on love. But if the editors had labored to satisfy my prejudices, they would have composed an entirely different book, and would have neglected to do the important job they have done.

What they have done, and done well, is what they set out to do. They have prepared a source book primarily for use in undergraduate courses on Christian ethics. They have had the wisdom to focus their selections on the fundamental issues in ethics and on the basic problems in theology that underlie them. The introductory sections for each chapter are clear, compact, and comprehensive. I do not know of any other book that does this job so well. This book will be widely used in colleges, and I know at least one theological seminary where it will be brought regularly to the attention of the students in the basic course in Christian ethics.

ROBERT E. FITCH

Professor of Christian Ethics, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California.

**The Early Church and the Coming Great Church.** By JOHN KNOX. New York: Abingdon Press, 1955. 160 pp. \$2.50.

This is an important and much needed book. Now that discussions of eschatology have somewhat subsided with the passing into history of the Evanston Conference, the nature of the Church remains the hot spot of unresolved difference in the ecumenical movement. There can be no great advance toward organic unity until further agreement is reached at this point, and as long as the apostolic authority of the "primitive undivided church" is insisted upon, there is not apt to be much flexibility on the part of those who defend the historic episcopate on this basis.

John Knox, who is Professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary, knows his way around in the literature of the first and second centuries as few men do. What he here presents will not give aid and comfort to a partisan view of any type, but will be very illuminating to any who will read the book sympathetically and impartially.



The author begins with incontrovertible evidence, mainly from Paul's letters, that there never was an undivided church, but on the contrary a great deal of diversity and division in the primitive Christian community. Indeed, the multiplicity of Paul's appeals for unity gives evidence that it did not exist! Aside from a common practice of baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, forms of worship differed, and there was no apostolic canon of Scripture, creed or episcopacy in the first century. What was common to all the churches, however, was an *event*—the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus; and a *Spirit*—the living presence of Jesus Christ as Lord. Together these created a *community*, which had in the beginning but a single creed, "Jesus is Lord and Christ."

Yet the emergence of a "Catholic" position in the early church from inherent tendencies is not illusory. Life and faith under the impact of Jesus as Lord of the Church led inevitably to form, and to the creation of an institutional structure. At the end of the first century or early in the second, the apostolic canon of Scripture was inaugurated by the collection of Paul's letters into a single corpus, perhaps introduced by the Epistle to the Ephesians with its strong emphasis on Christian unity. During the second century the earliest formulations of what was to become our Apostles' Creed took shape. And during this period, the initial practice of having sometimes bishops, sometimes presbyters as heads of churches developed into the historic episcopate. These were henceforth to be viewed as basic elements in the Christian community.

But what of "the coming great church"? In the author's judgment we must respect and accept an apostolic canon, creed and episcopate, not only as part of our historic past, but as natural and worthwhile developments from inherent factors in the life of the Church. On no other basis can we have a united Church. Yet these are not to be accepted in any fixed or wooden fashion, or in the illusion that they were present from the beginning. As the event of Jesus Christ and the Spirit created the Church, these must still be normative for contemporary views of apostolic authority. On this basis, there can be meeting-ground on even so thorny a subject as the historic episcopate.

Can this meeting of minds take place? Perhaps. One would like to hope so. However, for those of the free churches to accept the historic episcopate as essential and for those of the Catholic position to take as flexible a view of it as the author suggests, will require a fresh receptivity to the leading of the Spirit. To a mood which may make this possible on the basis of biblical knowledge, this book contributes much.

GEORGIA HARKNESS

Professor of Applied Theology, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California.

**The Dawn of Personality.** By EMILE CAILLIET. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1955. 232 pp. \$3.00.

The main theme of this great book is the nature and destiny of man. The problem is of course as ancient as man himself, and as complex. Different answers have been given to the question, "What Is Man?" Some said that man was an economic animal, others thought that man's rationality distinguished him from other animals, while the Psalmist and other religious thinkers said that man was made "a little lower than God." These different answers formed the different *Weltanschauungen* which gave rise to different religious and ethical expressions in the historical process.

Dr. Cailliet, unlike Descartes, begins with the *Sum* rather than with the *Cogito*. The primary question is not, Who am I? but, What kind of place am I in? That is, man becomes aware of his environment before he is conscious of his ego. This question has been debated throughout the centuries, and the author does not set out to prove anything. He tells us that the book is really an autobiographical account "writ large."

Once the primary question has been asked, certain immediate implications follow. "What kind of place am I in?" is followed by the question, "What am I to do in such a situation?" That is to say, the immediate implications are *the will to live and adjustment to the requirements of the environment*. These elemental implications are followed by the social implications involved in the process of living. Man becomes aware of the fact that he does not live or die unto himself. His behavior and his mental concepts are moulded by the social context. The more primitive the group, the more homogeneous it is. More complex societies are of course less rigid and tend to become heterogeneous. Nonetheless, even highly civilized societies impose definite behavior patterns which the individual cannot slough off without injury to himself.

Modern man is expected to be a well adjusted person. The nonconformist is generally regarded as a maladjusted person, hence, antisocial. Erich Fromm disputes this point. He points out that the maladjusted person is more of an individual than the perfectly adjusted person who gave up the struggle and made peace with society, thus losing the essence of personality namely, *freedom*.

In seeking to arrive at the dawn of Personality, the author starts out with the lowest aspect of existence and ascends the scale through the social, cultural and mental rungs of the ladder of being. This process may be termed *the ascent of Personality*. Once one has reached the top of the ladder, one still is faced with the important question, What is my ultimate destiny and purpose in this world of change and decay? It is here that man is not merely a *homo sapiens*, but a *homo religiosus*. He is faced with the alternative, "I either affirm or deny the reality of God." Man is now in the Game. It is important to note that Dr. Cailliet is not interested in the traditional "proofs" of the existence of God. The problem of the existence of God is still in the realm of ideas. He is concerned with the *reality* of God in the biblical sense. God is not the "Absolute Being," or "this intensity that increases with purity to a point of vanishing thinness." He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, God is a Person and not an Idea.

This alternative involves man in the choosing of two roads, the one leading to destruction, the other to eternal life. Here the author is on good biblical ground. When man faces God he is always placed in a crisis, which may lead him to despair or to salvation.

The author is fully at home in the literatures of the world, in the physical and social sciences as well as in theology. Yet, in spite of the great erudition displayed in the book, it is written in beautiful and simple language which should be understood by the ordinary person. It is difficult to label the book. We find in it traces of Bergson, Lloyd Morgan, Pascal, Kierkegaard and others. While one does not always find himself in agreement with some of the author's premises, one cannot help but feel that it is indeed a great book.

LOUIS SHEIN

St. Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ontario.

**Becoming.** By GORDON W. ALLPORT. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955. xi-106 pp. \$2.75.

The subtitle of the book, "Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality," suggests its nature and scope. Delivered as the Terry Lectures at Yale, the material of this book represents the author's response to "the assignment of assimilating and interpreting his discipline [psychology] as it relates to human welfare and to religion broadly conceived." The book thus becomes a summary, by an unusually competent psychologist, of the present state of the psychology of personality, with constant reference to the relevance of psychology to human welfare in general and religion in particular.

Allport divides psychology into two great types. One is the Lockian, in which the person is a collection of acts, and the mind a *tabula rasa* to be shaped from without. The other is the Leibnizian, in which the person is the *source* of acts. In the Lockian tradition, man is essentially something to be manipulated from outside himself; in the Leibnizian, a sense of freedom is kept; neither the will nor responsibility is lost.

Allport shows that the fascination of regarding oneself as scientific has tended to lure the psychologist into the Lockian camp, where the human person as seen by the psychologist tends to become empty and subject eventually to manipulation by dictators.

To remedy this state of things, as far as psychology is concerned, "the outlines of the needed psychology of becoming can be discovered by looking within ourselves; for it is knowledge of our own uniqueness that supplies the first, and probably the best, hints for acquiring orderly knowledge of others" (p. 23).

Will this require the concept of "the self" as basic in the new psychology? Many are now convinced that the answer must be "yes;" Allport is dubious, but it turns out that he is fearful lest "self" come to be regarded as a *homunculus*, a manikin who dwells in the head and eventually flies away to some unknown destination. To avoid this "restoring of the soul" in an unwanted sense, he proposes the term *proprium*. On this basis a psychology of becoming can be constructed, in which a sense of selfhood can be kept; and this is important both for democracy and for religion.

While brief, this is an important book because it keeps a scientist's respect for science, yet rises above scientism into a great openness of self-understanding, wisdom, and reverence. His fear of the return of the *homunculus* we believe is unnecessary, but his service to a psychology of the self is significant whether it be called "the *proprium*" or "the self."

LEWIS J. SHERRILL

Professor of Practical Theology, Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

**Religious Factors in Mental Illness.** By WAYNE E. OATES. New York: Association Press, 1955. xv-239 pp. \$3.50.

**A Doctor's Case Book in the Light of the Bible.** By PAUL TOURNIER, M.D. Originally published in French under the title *Bible et Médecine*, in Paris; English translation published in London, 1954. Distributed by Alec R. Allenson, Chicago, Illinois. 256 pp. \$3.75.

These two books are related in their common interest in making the healing resources of the disciplines of religion, medicine and psychiatry available to those who

need them. Furthermore, they are related in their common assumptions that these resources are best applied in harmony. Each author presents his own ministrations as fortified by an understanding of and a critical appraisal by the other.

The Rev. Wayne Oates points out that the psychiatrist can call the attention of the teacher of religion to that which he tends to forget: the dynamic character of the religion he professes and teaches. It is an observable fact that those professionals who label themselves as nonreligious at times have a greater awareness of the potentials for good or ill of religion than do the religionists who handle it carelessly. Religious educators, being reminded of the power of religion to hurt as well as to heal, have begun to re-examine not only the theological nature of the gospel proclaimed but the ways in which that gospel is communicated and administered to the growing lives of children and the imponderable difficulties of adults.

The author indicates that those who proclaim most loudly the soundness of their doctrine are often driven to mutilate the personality of others, alienate Christians from each other, and make ineffectual the witness of the controversialists to persons who are not Christian. But in the New Testament the word translated "sound" (Titus 1:9) means "health-giving," or in other words a teaching that is "hygienic."

The book speaks with equal pungency to the psychiatric professional who is too prone to accept the evidences of pathological religion as the norm. Fosdick's remark is quoted, that what Freud called religion Jesus called sin. Because the pathological person often expresses his pathology in religious symbols, it could be wished that the author, who is well qualified to do so, had used a little more fully his vantage point to press home a clear concept of the transferral phenomenon. In this way the cause of clearing religion from some unjust accusations of causing mental illness might have been further advanced.

The author's work in interpreting the contributions of religion to mental health, particularly in his chapter on "The Positive Work of Religion in the Therapy of Mental Illness," will be helpful to clergy and professional psychiatric workers alike.

Dr. Paul Tournier performs a similar constructively critical service for the medical profession by pointing out the sterility of the organicists' approach to medicine as against the creativeness of an approach which recognizes that healing is an effect and a sign of God's mercy. He affirms that from the point of diagnosis, the claim of the spiritual factors in illness must be heeded. He indicates that any kind of illness raises questions of two quite distinct orders: firstly, scientific—questions concerning the nature of the malady and its mechanism, diagnosis, aetiology, pathogenesis; secondly, spiritual—questions concerning the deep meaning of the illness, its purpose. We may say, then, that every illness calls for two diagnoses: one scientific, nosological, and causal; and the other spiritual, a diagnosis of its meaning and purpose.

Dr. Tournier quotes a remark by a patient, "We are prevented from dying but we are not helped to live." Thus we are confronted by those questions which medical practice raises and to which science has no answer: what are life, death, man, sickness, health? On these subjects medicine, as taught in our faculties and textbooks, remains silent. Behind its silence there lies the perplexity it experiences as it attempts with its purely scientific methods to grapple with fundamental problems of which we as doctors are aware, such as that of the nature of sickness. We turn therefore towards the Bible, as Pascal invites us. Being doctors, we are called to study it as doctors not as theologians. We reverse their process by starting from our practical concerns, from the questions raised daily by our work, and going to the

Bible to seek an answer. Such study will help to enrich our knowledge of the Scriptures, give us a better appreciation of their value for our daily life, and a new vision of our professional vocation. It will help also to cure our modern world of the exaggerated intellectualism to which it is prone.

These books can render an important service in developing appreciation for a kind of spiritual hygiene which can become the basis for working relations between religious and psychiatric workers, redounding to the benefit of all who receive their ministrations.

Because the authors write from the vantage point of their own professional competence and present their thesis in an interesting, nontechnical fashion, they are deserving of a wide reading and acceptance.

PAUL L. TILDEN

Associate Executive Director, Department of Pastoral Services, The National Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

**Hygiene of the Soul.** By F. W. ZEYLMANS VAN EMMICHOVEN, M.D. New York: Whittier Books, 1955. 179 pp. \$3.50.

**Holiness is Wholeness.** By JOSEPH GOLDBRUNNER. New York: Pantheon Books, 1955. 63 pp. \$1.75.

The first book is a series of homilies on such themes as fear, loneliness, education, doubt, hatred, destiny, and others. The author, a Dutch psychiatrist, is not concerned with the psychological dynamics behind these and other problems. He sees them as problems to be met directly, and proceeds to philosophize on each of them under the guise of talking with a friend or group. The flavor of the discussions is religious rather than psychological, with a strong emphasis on the mystical. It is difficult to summarize the thought, in that there is no logical development in the book. One of the constantly recurring themes is that the human "I" must constantly die so that the divine "I" is born. The divine "I" is born through a mystical union with or experience of Christ. With much of his thought we would have no quarrel; the problem is that we are not sure what he is saying much of the time. This kind of philosophizing is of little value to persons trying to find their way out of a neurosis. However, it could be the vehicle for suggestion by a strong, dominant personality, which we would judge the author happens to be.

The second book is quite different. Written in a meditative style, it faces some of the deeper issues in the relationship between Christianity and modern depth psychology. The author, a Bavarian by birth, a Catholic priest and an exponent of the psychology of C. G. Jung, gets to a level much deeper than the moralism and rationalism which is so frequent in Catholic writings, and he departs radically from Jung's views on religion!

Between man and God stands death. The way to holiness leads through death. Modern man rejects a kind of holiness which mortifies the body. The body with all of its strivings must be included in any view of Christian redemption. The meaning of Christ's Incarnation is being understood in the light of the need for wholeness in human life, for the integration of the body into the spiritual life. Man's spiritual life is also emerging from tyranny to the intellect. This tyranny is largely responsible for the increase of neuroses. To live a spiritually healthy life a person must find his own truth, and this requires that he come to terms with the irrational forces within him.

Man comes to his true self only when he lays bare his soul, and this requires that he plunge into himself at the point where the suffering is the greatest. The conscious must learn to come to terms with the unconscious. One of man's deepest problems is fear; the answer to this is faith in the sense of abandonment to an unknown God, to a Person. This involves a surrender which is necessary to avoid sin and disease. Likewise man has within him a strong impulse toward growth which must be fulfilled, else he becomes sick. Christian hope is a virtue which makes growth possible, for it draws man toward his future. Agape is the answer to Eros, not by denying or repressing Eros, but by taking it into itself and affirming it in its true expression. The problem, how to form a holy and Christlike life while affirming all the energies of the personality, is answered only in the Cross, for through the Cross holiness and health become one.

This very sketchy outline does not do justice to the richness of the author's thought and style. He writes with a moving power, and a sense of reality is communicated through his words. We are confronted here with some of the deeper problems of existence, of health, and of the Christian faith in their mutual inter-relatedness. The book is stimulating and helpful, not only to the mind but also to the spirit.

CARROLL A. WISE

Professor of Pastoral Psychology and Counseling, Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois.

**Beyond Despair.** By G. RAY JORDAN. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955. ix-166 pp. \$2.50.

If you are looking for a book of very readable sermons, by all means buy Dr. Jordan's *Beyond Despair*, subtitled "When Religion Becomes Real." The author thinks in pictures and teaches with parables. This is easy, fast reading with many profound truths stated in such homely language as to make them appear more obvious than profound.

"The areas of life which seem to drive us mad are the very ones in which we must give ourselves to God with mad abandon" (p. 20). "It is not merely both *comforting* and *superficial* to deceive ourselves; it is *dangerous* to assume as a fact something which is not true" (p. 71). "Only God can remake a man, but man must let him. That means our desires for God must be so real and so deep, so sincere, that they have creative power" (p. 80). "We cannot just say we want divine strength and then go our way, expecting to receive it. *We must choose the Highest if we want the help of the Highest*" (p. 122).

The sermon titles include: "When Religion Becomes Real," "Living Sanely in an Insane World," "We Can Know All We Really Need to Know," "When Hope Becomes Daring," "Let's Face the Music," "Be Honest With Yourself," "You Can Start Life Over Again," "Become a Friend of Yourself," "You Are the Doctor," "Trust God: He Will Reign Forever."

Dr. Jordan is a teacher. He approaches his point from many angles, sometimes multiplying his illustrations for emphasis. This is not a book for the pedant. It is written as a witness, not as an argument. It is illustrative rather than scholarly. Some will say Dr. Jordan is over-generous with illustrations.

*Beyond Despair* is an affirmation in terms of man's experience; an experience that begins with the assumption that faith and hope and beauty and value are realities.



At times the reader feels that he is listening to a preacher in the pulpit rather than reading sentences from an author's study. Dr. Jordan has found his way beyond despair and urges you to join him.

ALLEN E. CLAXTON

Broadway Temple-Washington Heights Methodist Church, New York City.

**Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation.** By W. SCHWARZ. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1955. xiv-225 pp. \$4.75.

The interest of this book is twofold: it deals in a thorough and satisfying manner with a specific historical theme and thereby illumines a problem which is always with us, and which is particularly exercising the church in our day. One of the marks of the contemporary theological scene has been a return to the Bible as the authoritative source and norm for our understanding of Christianity. This in turn has necessitated a fresh communication of the Bible to our generation. The recent appearance of the Revised Standard Version and the present activity of translators in Britain (under the direction of Dr. C. H. Dodd, who contributes a characteristically illuminating foreword to this volume) are therefore not isolated phenomena but part and parcel of the revived interest in Biblical Theology, of the need to re-discover the "truth" of the Bible and to communicate it.

And at such a time as this it is well to be reminded how the problem of communication through translation has been dealt with in the church in the past. This Dr. Schwarz does for us for the period before and especially during the Reformation. The first chapter indicates how naturally conservative opposition to new translations always emerges. This is not only because the church is concerned to preserve a tradition which it regards as of divine origin and, therefore, final, but also because religious belief is the cornerstone of biblical interpretation. Thus the community becomes conjoined, as it were, with the tradition as handed down by the forefathers; and the terminology in which that tradition is so handed down itself gains the value of tradition, and has itself therefore to be jealously guarded by the church. Thus it is that a new translation can be a serious menace to the received tradition. This is seen particularly in the claim of the Roman Church since 1546 that the Vulgate is authentic, i.e., that it replaces the original text of Scripture in every respect; the Vulgate and not the original text is the basis for the interpretation and translation of the Bible.

How, then, are we to regard translations of Scripture? Two views which go back to pre-Christian times have continually re-emerged in the history of the church—the inspirational and the philological. Dr. Schwarz shows how these two views were held on the origin of the Septuagint. The Letter of Aristeas presents the view which Schwarz calls the philological—in this letter no miracle happens to enlighten the translators of the LXX. These, on the contrary, produce a translation which is the work of human minds, albeit minds pious and purified. For Philo, on the other hand, the LXX is an inspired work and cannot, therefore, be compared with any other translation. "It is in complete identity with the original, it is truly God's word" (p. 24).

The subsequent discussion on the significance of translation in the church circles around these two principles. Dr. Schwarz shows how the clash in the fifth century between Jerome, who favored the philological principle, and Augustine, who favored the inspirational principle as far as the LXX was concerned, re-emerges with an

important modification—in the struggles of Reuchlin and Erasmus, the philological champions, and Luther, who favored the inspirational principle. However, the sixteenth-century clash is not an exact replica of that between Jerome and Augustine, because Luther, despite his insistence on the inspirational principle, was influenced in a deep sense by the Renaissance. And not only so, but Luther never claimed that his German Bible "can provide a basis for the interpretation of God's word," i.e., it could never be authentic. In this respect Luther accepts a humanistic point of view. And there is a still further fundamental point to be noticed. For Luther the gospel has been given to man through the Holy Ghost only, but his message was transmitted by means of language. This means that translators (the plural is here used advisedly) must have two things—primarily the gift of the Holy Ghost (inspiration), without which there is no understanding of the Bible, but also understanding of the language in which the Bible was first given. They must be true to heaven and earth, as it were—points which (and this is his glory) for Luther are kindred. Thus in a real sense Luther, while essentially inspirational in his new translation, comes to terms also with the philological principle.

Of the many excellencies of this volume space forbids me to write. But apart from the development of the main theme it offers illuminating sidelights on the painful emergence of the significance of Hebrew for the understanding of the Bible and Luther's penetrating insight into the significance of language in civilization and other things. The reviewer would have welcomed a fuller treatment of Rabbinic influences on Jerome and, in view of our present concern with this, a closing summary giving Dr. Schwarz's own views on the problem of translation. But it would perhaps be ungracious to ask for more when so much has been so palatably given.

W. D. DAVIES

Professor of Religion, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

**The Book of Acts in History.** By HENRY J. CADBURY. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955. 170 pp. \$2.75.

The publication of any book written by Henry J. Cadbury, who for twenty years was professor of New Testament at Harvard Divinity School, is an event of first-rate importance for students of the New Testament. Especially is this so if it deals with Luke-Acts, an area of study where Dr. Cadbury is recognized as especially competent.

His earlier works on Luke-Acts include *The Style and Literary Method of Luke* (1920), *The Making of Luke-Acts* (1927), and a sizable contribution to the *magnum opus*, *The Beginnings of Christianity* in five volumes (1920-33), edited by F. J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. The present book is thus in part a supplement to and crowning of his earlier efforts in this important area of New Testament investigation.

The title of the book before us is somewhat ambiguous. This is recognized by the author and its advantages are exploited. It allows him to discuss first what is most important to him, namely, the relation of the Book of Acts to the history and culture of the times in which it was written and, secondly, the impact of the book on the centuries following its appearance. Chapters I-V deal with the former subject and Chapter VI with the latter.

In relating the Book of Acts to its historical and cultural background, Cadbury treats the oriental, Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian colorations (or strands) in the narrative. He demonstrates by hundreds of fascinating examples how widely the

book reflects the customs, ideologies, nomenclature, local color, political history, geography, and the like, of the times out of which it came. Though his motivation in writing is in no sense apologetic, his chapters form an unbreakable chain of evidence for the substantial accuracy of the record contained in Acts. His view of the reliability of Acts appears to be somewhat higher than that of such scholars as D. W. Riddle, Morton Scott Enslin, and John Knox, for example.

It is apparent at once that Cadbury is entirely at home in the literature and culture of the Graeco-Roman world. One might not inappropriately call him "philhellene." It is fascinating to follow him on his search through old Athens for the seat of the Areopagus, to catch from his lips lines from Cleanthes or Epimenides, to rummage with him through literary and nonliterary papyri, and to saunter with him along Roman roads of the eastern Mediterranean region counting the milestones. The Book of Acts can never be the same after such illuminating experiences.

Chapter IV, in which Acts is related to its Jewish background, is perhaps the least outstanding. Only passing attention is given to the fabulous Dead Sea Scrolls from which a flood of light on the primitive church as described in Acts has been falling. One wishes also for more attention to the synagogal background of primitive Christianity as now understood by men like E. L. Sukenik and E. R. Goodenough. These materials are helping us understand the place occupied by the infant church in sectarian Judaism.

The final chapter treats the place of Acts in the formation of the New Testament canon. Few writers can deal with technical matters in so intriguing a way. Cadbury confesses to a love of puzzles, whether jigsaw or detective. He has an uncanny way of getting the pieces together.

You will not want to miss this book!

EDWARD P. BLAIR

Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois.

**The Sword and the Cross.** By ROBERT M. GRANT. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955. 144 pp. \$2.75.

This book treats the relations of the Roman government to Christians and the Church up to the Toleration Edict of 311. It is an important subject, but in the present reviewer's opinion, the treatment here offered is not of commensurate importance. It is not that Dr. Grant's conversance with the primary material (which those who know his previous work are familiar with) is not displayed on every page. But it seems to suffer in total effectiveness rather from lack of being addressed to a clearly defined body of readers.

It has a lot of church history in it, yet those interested chiefly in the history of their Christian forebears will miss a sympathetic picture of their struggles and sufferings "under the Cross." Its declared purpose is to delineate "the history of the Roman government's opposition to Christianity," yet the treatment of the juridical aspect of that topic leaves something to be desired. The book does not successfully reduce the complex data to memorable trends for the beginner; nor, on the other hand, does it provide the apparatus beloved of scholars for verifying references and balancing hypotheses.

The opening question is, "Why did the Roman government persecute Christianity and other foreign religions?" (p. 1) There are two strands in the answer, one corresponding to the tendency of Christianity to take out naturalization papers

in the Empire, the other to its tendency to resist assimilation to the world. As to the first: "Roman officials . . . did not recognize that Christianity, like the Bacchanalia and the Egyptian religion, had changed, and had in effect become Romanized." (p. 138). The author's conclusion along this line is that one of the chief causes of the persecutions was simply the ignorance of the Roman officials as to the true nature of Christianity, as though the only trouble were a "failure of communication" (p. 121). The other strand of the answer represents those "Christians [who] would not perform the symbolic acts required of Romans" (p. 139), that is to say, sacrifice to Rome's gods. Those sacrifices stood for a good deal that was utterly repugnant to the true Christian. In Tertullian's language, he would pray for, but not to, the Emperor (p. 128); Polycarp could not be made to say "Caesar is Lord" (p. 85), for to him, Jesus was Lord.

Dr. Grant reminds us repeatedly, and with reason, that many Christians professed their loyalty to the Empire and did so in all sincerity. But what they meant by loyalty was not enough for the government, which after the fashion of totalitarian governments feels that it has nothing, unless it has all.

RICHARD M. CAMERON

Professor of Church History, Boston University School of Theology, Boston, Massachusetts.

**Portrait of Calvin.** By T. H. L. PARKER. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955. 125 pp. \$2.00.

First published in England last year by the Student Christian Movement Press, this brief account of John Calvin is presented as "a water-colour . . . not a photograph." The author is a young Anglican vicar, trained at Cambridge in Reformation theology. He has done his drawing freehand, and applies his colors gently; but the portrait that emerges is on the whole clear and attractive.

The first two chapters, which are essentially biographical, are almost too sketchy. The brief imprisonment at Noyon, whither Calvin went in 1534 to resign his benefices, is not mentioned. Neither is the sojourn at Angoulême, during which the first edition of the *Institutes* may have been written.

More satisfying is the chapter, "Man of Letters," an appreciative treatment of Calvin's style both in Latin and in French. A minor slip here is the implication that the author of the *Institutes* himself translated the whole of his final edition. In fact the French text is by another (and inferior) hand, except for the first seven chapters of Book I. This section ends with a helpful note "on the reading of Calvin," suggesting that the novice should begin with the commentaries on St. John and Ephesians. Of English versions Parker prefers the sixteenth-century Norton to the nineteenth-century Allen or Beveridge.

The treatment of Calvin's theology is sympathetic, though not uncritically applauding. The "two blemishes" noted are Calvin's ambiguity about the rôle of natural theology, and his failure to include the Christ in his basic discussion of predestination. On the other hand, says Parker, Calvin is completely true to the New Testament gospel of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Fourteen pages are not enough, however, for adequate exposition of Calvinistic doctrine. The enquiring reader will be driven, and fortunately, to find out for himself what Calvin did say.

The most illuminating parts of the portrait are those which exhibit Calvin in Geneva as pastor, as family man, as establisher and enforcer of discipline. A house

full of children would seem to many a strange setting for the supposedly stern and solitary theologian. Is it possible that our common suppositions are at fault? The case of Servetus is explained, but not excused. In conclusion Parker provides a valuable summary of contacts among Calvin, Luther, and the Anglicans.

How sad it is that the projected Protestant Council never was held! Today at last we are finding surrogates for it; and this little study of Calvin by an heir of Cranmer is at once a sign of the times and a contribution to their betterment.

GEORGE HEDLEY

Chaplain of Mills College, Oakland, California.

**Toward a Theology of Evangelism.** By JULIAN N. HARTT. New York: Abingdon Press, 1955. 123 pp. \$2.00.

Near the end of the first chapter Professor Hartt has this to say about his own book: "[it] . . . is something by way of reflection upon the fundamentals of Christian existence, reflection inspired by the desire to grasp the meaning of the church's commission." He goes on to point out that it is not systematic theology, nor is it biblical theology, except in a "rarefied sense."

"Reflection upon fundamentals" is indeed the exact term. And the fundamentals are those of Christian *existence* rather than, generally speaking, authoritative revelation. Among the fundamentals which are dealt with are those suggested by the chapter titles, the opening ones following roughly the lines of the Creed: "God the Almighty Father," "Our Lord Jesus Christ," "The Human Situation," "The Holy Spirit and the Church." Then come five that deal with the basic tensions and problems of Christian thought: "The World and the Kingdom," "World Revolution and Individual Transformation," "Evangelical Zeal and Cultural Pride," "The Race with Time," and "The Living Word in Our Midst." Each of these is given thoughtful and relevant discussion, the last five being particularly fresh.

It is impossible not to be interested in this work. The very subjects covered include the focal points for theological discussion and theologians' interest. Moreover Professor Hartt writes in a tersely dramatic style; there is never a superfluous word, never a dull expression. One finds sharp and clever insights on almost every page. The description of the demigods of our day, for example, speaks of them as whispering in every funeral parlor, as "genteel and conventional . . . those companionable household deities of a people withdrawn as far as humanly possible from the raw frontiers of existence."

It may be this very terse style that makes the difficulty, or it may be a certain indefiniteness of thought. Whatever the reason, there are sentences, and many of them crucial, which simply do not convey much to the mind. Often they are equational statements, as for example: "The holy inspiration is the community of love"; "The inspiration of the Holy Spirit . . . is Christ's love. . ."; "The Holy Spirit is the Life of this community"; "Resurrection is . . . the creation of salvation."

It is not a matter of sentences only. Here, for example, is a treatment of the fundamentals of Christian faith concerning "Our Lord, Jesus Christ," under the subheads: "Jesus Christ is the supreme witness to the kingdom of God, Jesus Christ is the incarnate Lord, the crown prince and heir of the Kingdom; Jesus Christ is the Kingdom." To say the least, that ignores a good deal of the biblical foundation for Christian faith. It does not help very much to remove the two most complex subjects in the New Testament by the simple expedient of equating them.

This is all to say that the title of the book is misleading. As reflections on major themes, and as a discussion of Christian existence, this is a commendable and interesting piece of work.

BALMER H. KELLY

Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia; Editor of *Interpretation*.

**Fools for Christ.** By JAROSLAV PELIKAN. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955. ix-172 pp. \$3.00.

This book sets out to illustrate in six brief essays on Kierkegaard, Paul, Dostoevski, Luther, Nietzsche, and Bach, the meaning of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful for the comprehension of God and Christ. The chapter headings are: (1) Kierkegaard: The Holy and the True; (2) Paul: The Truth in Christ; (3) Dostoevski: The Holy and the Good; (4) Luther: The Goodness of God; (5) Nietzsche: The Holy and the Beautiful; (6) Bach: The Beauty of Holiness.

Kierkegaard's anti-intellectualism is all the more impressive, as it was voiced by a genius capable of such rare intellectual penetration of theological and philosophical problems that even today we have no satisfactory study of his specific philosophical contribution. According to him, God is not apprehended intellectually. Experiencing him results in the establishment of a fellowship in Christ Jesus. The righteousness of the law and its truth was rejected by Paul's acceptance of Christ. In Christ the whole creation was set free and granted the liberty of the children of God.

Dostoevski's Raskolnikov and Sonia were living witnesses to the fact that Holiness and Goodness are not identical. God's mysterious love of the sinner transcends our ordinary categories of virtue and sin, and again, the surrender to Christ redeems their love. Luther's demand for "goodness made theonomous" points to the only way to attain to the Good; it is the right relationship to the Holy who forgives sin. "The basic distinction was between God as the Holy and man as a sinner." The Good is available as a gift from the Holy in the forgiveness of sins, and the Holy confronts us in Christ.

Nietzsche's flight into a rhapsodic estheticism and aristocratic isolation remained yet distantly cognizant of Christ's perfection. But he failed in apprehending the all-comprehensive Truth, Goodness and Beauty because of his revolt against God "who had died." For Bach, the Holy is not, first of all, a sublimely True or ultimately Beautiful. The Holy is made flesh in Christ. Bach's all-embracing concern was to have Beauty serve the Holy, not only in his compositions but even in his craft as an organ builder.

The author is at his best when his subject allows him to move about in his own field of historical theology. His essays on Paul and Luther are, therefore, easily the most rewarding. The study on Kierkegaard might well have been extended to esthetics, to which Kierkegaard devoted remarkable work. Dostoevski's characters should certainly have included Prince Myshkin (*The Idiot*), who is the most fascinating example of a superman of goodness. It is a bit puzzling why Nietzsche, the atheist, was invited to this lofty company of "Fools for Christ." He must have been admitted on somewhat the same reasoning that got Pontius Pilate into the Apostles' Creed, and he remains easily the most alien character in this group.

A certain thinness, if not a sense of timidity, is apparent in the treatment of the chapters dealing with Kierkegaard, Dostoevski, Nietzsche, and Bach—a note for which their nontheological character and the brief compass of the book may account. On the other hand, the author's readiness to lump Kierkegaard and Dostoevski together



with Nietzsche as insane, and his final dictum on Nietzsche's realizing during his insanity that neither Truth nor Beauty nor Goodness could lead to God, are rather rash excursions into psychiatric generalities. But these obvious weaknesses should not detract from the value of the author's attempt to achieve a novel and panoramic view. The book assembles a fairly rich material from European *Geistesgeschichte* and opens up new vistas toward a spiritual landscape that promises great discoveries to an explorer willing to tread new paths. Jaroslav Pelikan's book is more impressive as a promise than an achievement. It will, nevertheless, introduce newcomers to the field of literary and artistic evaluation to a commendable effort at giving fresh substance to Paul's admonition that "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

WILLIAM HUBBEN

Editor, *Friends Journal*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## Book Notices

Harper & Brothers have published the official *Evanston Report: The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (\$5.00), edited by W. A. Visser 't Hooft. "Complete and detailed, the report is well proportioned among description, reports and statistics. A narrative account gives the color and 'feel' of the great assembly. . . . Here, too, are the final resolutions, interspersed with pertinent excerpts of the discussion, which greatly enliven the text."

We have received No. 15 of the *Studies in Biblical Theology* (published in England, distributed by Alec R. Allenson, Chicago; \$1.50). This is *Conscience in the New Testament*, by C. A. Pierce; a penetrating study of *Syneidesis* "in the light of its sources, and with particular reference to St. Paul; with some observations regarding its pastoral relevance today." Chapter headings include "The Fallacy of Stoic Origin," the background, use, and meaning of "conscience," "Conscience and Wrath," "Conscience and the Weak Brother," "Conscience and Faith," "Conscience and Atonement," "Conscience in the Modern World," "Conscience and the Church."

*Selections from John Wesley's "Notes on the New Testament"* have been compiled and interspersed with explanatory comments by John Lawson. This handy English book, too, is distributed by Alec R. Allenson; \$3.00.

Cornell University Press has brought out useful brief paperback treatments of various aspects of Western civilization, planned not only for college classrooms but for "a mature and literate audience" at \$1.25 apiece. Harry Orlinsky has written *The Story of Israel*, and Marshall W. Baldwin, *The Medieval Church* (also published by Oxford University Press). A third booklet is *The Age of Reformation*, by E. Harris Harbison of Princeton. Such works are helpful whether as an introduction or as a refresher course.

Penguin Books has brought out Dorothy Sayers' translation of Dante's *Purgatory* (pap., 85 cents), having previously published her version of the *Inferno*. Several others, even in recent years, have translated the *Divine Comedy*; but this fine translation by Miss Sayers is thoroughly readable, helpfully annotated, and supplied with a brilliant introduction. It sheds sympathetic light not only on the poet but also on that great integrated structure of faith that was medieval Christianity. She calls the *Purgatory* "for English readers the least known [of the three sections], the least quoted, and the most beloved," "this tenderest, subtlest, and most human section of the *Comedy*."

The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, in conjunction with Longmans Green of London, are bringing out a series, *Ancient Christian Writers* (the Fathers in translation). We have received No. 20 of these, *Rufinus' Commentary on the Apostles' Creed*, translated and edited by J. N. D. Kelly, principal of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford (\$2.75). Rufinus, an ascetic scholar of modest talents, was a friend of St. Jerome. When he translated the works of Origen into Latin, he became embroiled in the controversy over Origen; and Jerome rejected him with violent strictures which put Rufinus under a cloud for centuries. Rufinus' principal original work, however, this commentary on the Creed written for converts and others taking instruction, enjoyed a widespread influence and deserved popularity.

*The Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain* has been compiled in

selected readings from his works, by Joseph W. Evans and Leo R. Ward, both of the University of Notre Dame, in consultation with Maritain himself, who writes a preface. (Scribner, \$5.00). This will be a real boon to students of this gifted and prolific Catholic philosopher.

Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan, has brought out two supplementary volumes to the 13-volume *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. These two are designed to bring the whole set up to date, and are entitled *The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Dr. Lef-ferts A. Loetscher of Princeton is Editor-in-chief. The two new volumes are sold separately at \$13.50 until December 31, 1955, and will thereafter be priced at \$15. The complete 15-volume set is priced at \$78.50.

A significant little volume in Harper's World Perspectives Series is *Recovery of Faith*, by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (\$3.00). An outstanding eclectic philosopher of India, who has taught and lectured at Oxford and the University of Chicago, Dr. Radhakrishnan sees the different religions as "like various languages in which God has spoken to man," and calls for "a rational faith, which does not mock the free spirit of man by arbitrary dogmas or hesitating negations, a new vision of God in whose name we can launch a crusade against the strange cults which are now competing for mastery over the souls of men."

*Danish Rebel*, a life of Grundtvig by Johannes Knudsen, has recently been issued by Muhlenberg Press (\$3.50). Contemporary with Kierkegaard, N. F. S. Grundtvig was a contrasting, happy, and dynamic type of Christian personality. His founding and direction of the Danish folk schools made him world famous as an educator; he wrote over 2,000 hymns, produced a great work on Nordic mythology, contributed to theology, left his mark not only on the church but on Danish culture. The author, a Lutheran scholar educated in both the United States and Denmark, is highly qualified for his task.

Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, has written a new book, *The Defense of the Faith* (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, \$4.95). He presents the Reformed faith according to what he holds to be the appropriate and Scriptural method of apologetics—in contrast to the methods of Catholicism, Arminianism, and dialectical theology; and replies in detail to his various critics (who are also orthodox theologians within the Reformed faith).

*Completing the Reformation*, by William Robinson, is a series of lectures delivered at and published in pamphlet form by the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky. The theme is the Christian doctrine of vocation; chapters include "The Clergy and the Laity in the New Testament," "Grace as Applied to Vocation," "The Sacraments and Life," "The Church as the Household of God—God's *Laos* and *Kleros*."

Walter Russell Bowie has written *The Story of the Church* (Abingdon, \$2.95) in response to the requests of many who loved his *Story of the Bible*. For young and old, "with the scholar's sure grasp of facts and the accomplished story teller's vivid use of detail, Dr. Bowie offers every Christian a better understanding of his glorious heritage."

Friendship Press this year has been publishing studies of the (North) American Indians for mission study groups. We have received *Within Two Worlds*, by David M. Cory, and *The Gift Is Rich*, by E. Russell Carter (both cl. \$2.00, pap. \$1.25.) Dr. Cory welcomes into his Brooklyn congregation the Indian-American steel workers from a reservation in Canada who maintain happy economic relations

with their tribe at home. He writes informatively about the problems and achievements of these people everywhere caught between the two cultures, whether on or off the reservation. E. Russell Carter, now field representative for Indian work for the National Council of Churches, writes of the many little-known contributions of the Indians to our own culture, both material and spiritual. The second part contains a selection of Indian poetry and prose, showing how to them, both before and after they became Christians, "religion was life."

Another Friendship book is *Hope Rises From the Land*, by Ralph A. Felton (\$2.50, \$1.50), who tells a dramatic and copiously illustrated story of what agricultural missions are doing for hungry and needy people all over the world, beginning to meet the tremendous need as "a construction force opposing the false Messiah"; they "have not separated the material and spiritual needs" but "have based their work on the belief that the whole man must be served if there is to be real, meaningful, and lasting security."

*Religion on the Campus*, by George Hedley (Macmillan, \$2.75), is a selection of very live sermons preached by this professor-chaplain at Mills College in recent years. These are reproduced with many of the particular references and personal touches which reflect "an atmosphere at once of active religious inquiry and of sincere religious devotion, created and maintained by students and faculty alike." The three main divisions are "Religion on the Campus," "Some Student Problems" (questions handed in by students), and "Some Questions of Theology."

Pendle Hill, the Friends' Center for religious and social studies in Wallingford, Pa., has issued as usual its annual series of six pamphlets. This 1954-1955 series includes *A Sense of Living*, by Mildred Tonge, dealing with work with varied adult groups in experimental creative writing. *Religion and Mental Illness* is an excellent study by Carol Murphy, which speaks both to workers in mental institutions and to laymen. *From Where They Sit*, by Dorothy Hutchinson, is an illuminating account of a round-the-world "Journey of Friendship" taken recently by a Quaker housewife and her young Negro companion, visiting sixteen families of widely varied cultures.

In April, 1955, appeared Vol. I, No. 1 of the *Canadian Journal of Theology*, "A Quarterly of Christian Thought." The editors anticipated two reactions: "Not another theological Journal!" and "Ah, at last a *Canadian Journal of Theology*!" The superior validity of the second is clear; especially in a time when "we are in a period of theological quickening because the whole life of the Church has been quickened." In this first number Gerald Cragg discusses the present and future of Canadian theology; R. B. Y. Scott, "Is Preaching Prophecy?" A. S. Dewdney offers a critique of Nygren in "Agape and Eros;" F. W. Dillistone and educator Hilda Neathy also contribute. Subscription price is \$3.00 per year, \$5.00 for two years (\$1.50 and \$3.00 for students); write the Secretary of the Board of Directors, 65 Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto 5, Ontario, Canada.

E. H. L.



